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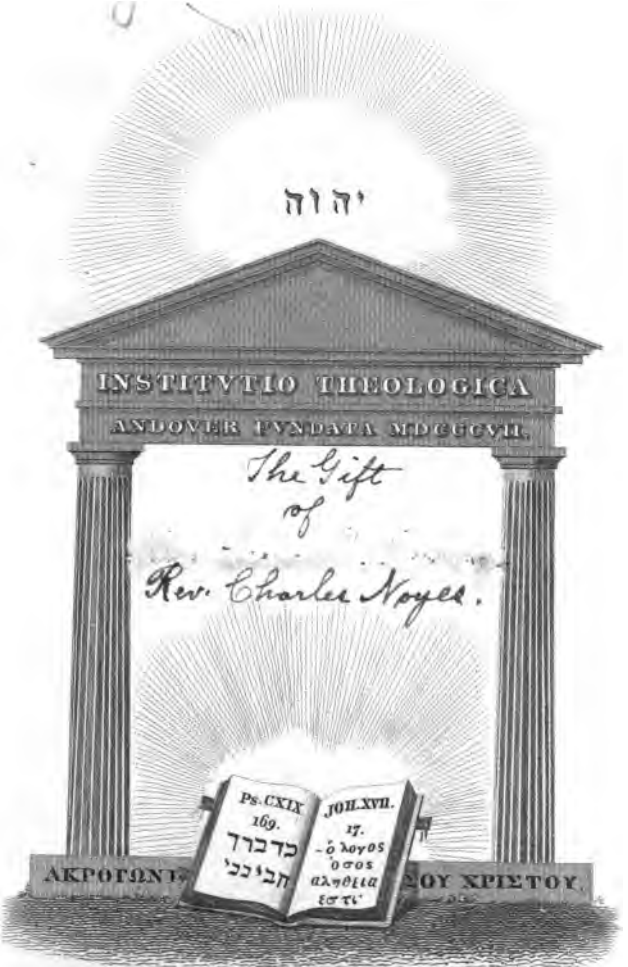

The Gift
of
Rev. Charles Noyes.

AT OUR BEST.

BY

SUMNER ELLIS.

"There are those whose spirits walk
Abreast of angels and the future here."
BAILEY'S FESTUS.

BOSTON:
LEE AND SHEPARD.
NEW YORK: LEE, SHEPARD, AND DILLINGHAM.
1873.

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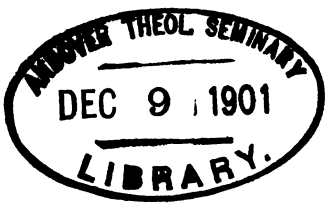

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PRESS OF JOHN WILSON AND SON.

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AT OUR BEST.

AT OUR BEST.

I.

AT OUR BEST.

'Though Time thy bloom is stealing,
There 's still beyond his art
The wild-flower wreath of feeling."

HALLECK.

'The soul of music slumbers in the shell,
Till wak'd and kindled by the master's spell;
And feeling hearts, touch them but lightly, pour
A thousand melodies unheard before."

ROGERS'S HUMAN LIFE.

WE have had many definitions of genius, and many refusals to attempt to define it, as somewhat that is indefinable, a thing that eludes and takes some other shape, and when we think we have it we have it not. Like beauty, inspiration, and instinct, it lies in a region of uncertain and shifting lights; is itself, and not itself; appears to be this till another view

dawns, and it must be that: but the last will not stick better than the first, in the presence of some other revelation. But, after all the learned clamor, what if genius were so simple a thing as a larger and finer degree of sensibility, a *plus* of vital heat, some more feeling and spirit among our talents!

Every one knows what advantage lies in being kindled. For he who could say nothing before can say anything now, and with rare logic, imagination, and pertinency: sterility becomes suddenly fertile, as if the desert were to bloom and bear fruit at once; cowardice gives place to courage, or we have exchanged our fawn for a lion. Am I the same man to-day I was yesterday? — *now* so aerial and lithe, and full of rapt visions, and eager for better communions, having down my rare books for rare occasions, or fleeing to gaze again, and worthily, at some fine landscape or work of art, but *then* only a mole without eyes in some dark corner, or an oyster in the mud, or a foolish bat flying blind in the day. The same, and not the same; the same *plus* a heat that has freed the frozen and pent-up currents, or a quickened sensibility that gives me to myself, installs me in full command of my powers, and befriends intu-

itions and spontaneities, as a better atmosphere gives sharpness and range to the eye.

Every one is now and then above his talent, and would be taken to be, not himself, but another; as the dray-horse, on occasions, rises into airs and antics, and we must think some Flying Childers or Arabian barb had slept within him until now. The most ordinary minds ascend into mounts they cannot keep, caught up and borne aloft by some tidal wave of feeling. We overtake our dreams, if speeded by a new and powerful impulse. Once or twice, or oftener, in a lifetime, we shall meet the universe aplomb and level, and find open and easy and charming relations; see eye to eye; vibrate like harps to the finer winds; look into strange secrets and break old illusions with a cool unconcern, as if we were beforehand with these things, and realize that we have given a moment's relief to the usual condescensions in our favor. The angels of every order seem on the point of proclaiming our peership. High legends and heroic anecdotes read as if quite low in their tone; belief in miracles is at last easy; and we should expect, were the celebrated wits and wise men back again, they would offer us their hand, and ask us to dinner, and install us in their clubs.

We have suddenly broken into superior ranks. And how Hope now plumes her wings! Henceforth we have done with common clay! Adieu, ye lower walks and dull, foolish hours!

But alas! to-morrow will be another yesterday. We all know the valley on the other side of this mountain, and that our descent is too sure to the old ways of plodding and jogging. Here we are once more hammering cold iron, for the fire has gone out in our forge; again bungling and botching at our tasks; again at our doom of forcing very ordinary results that but just now came of themselves, and with a higher beauty and charm. We have not the sensibility for long elevation; cannot command at pleasure the degree of feeling or inspiration that insures a ready and easy success. Our April tide ends in an August drought.

The fervent spirit cannot be too much counted on or coveted, and especially by Englishmen and Americans, who have inherited the coldness and hardness of their Saxon ancestors. The first petition in all our prayers might well be, — "Give us more and finer feeling, O most vital One!" The outcry of Hafiz for ecstasy, which he calls "wine," abating its Oriental verbiage, might well enough be adopted by any of us, and said before breakfast every morning: —

"Quickly furnish me Solomon's ring;
Alexander's weird glass be my meed;
The philospher's stone to me bring;
Also give me the cup of Jemschid:—
In one word, I but ask, Host of mine,
That thou fetch me a draught of thy wine!
Bring me wine! I would wash this old cowl
From the stains which have made it so foul.
Bring me wine! By my puissant arm
The thick net of deceit and of harm,
Which the priests have spread over the world,
Shall be rent, and in laughter be hurled.
Bring me wine! I the earth will subdue.
Bring me wine! I the heaven will storm through.
Bring me wine, bring it quick, make no halt!
To the throne of both worlds I will vault.
All is in the red streamlet divine.
Bring me wine! O my Host, bring me wine!"

Whilst the East delights to be drunk with feeling, the West seems to have some dread of fervor. It takes to one kind of intoxication readily enough, but it is not that of the heart. Emotion is at some discount with us, as if it were not quite creditable or bankable. I believe laughter is down in the books as somewhat vulgar; and our religion seems to be in some dread of pentecosts and loss of respectability, through fervor. We have a conceit never to show any signs of surprise; for who would have his neighbors know that he was not beforehand with all secrets? or that he does not stand level

with all that may happen, and in a mood to wonder rather that the fallings-out are so trivial? There is a modern pride of coldness and stolidity, which is fatal to our poetry, and our social ease and triumph, and the unction and prevailing power of our prayers. We have made an idol of dignity and deliberation. Even our grief must conform, and mind the degrees and shadings of its costume, punctiliously observing the full and the half and the quarter mourning, and we know not what smaller fractions.

But where must we look, if not into this inner world of feelings, if we would know both the extent and the rank of the life we have lived, and are living? What is the web we have spun, and are spinning, with these quick threads? Do we feel only like the mollusk and snail, slightly and at wide intervals? Then our life is a mere span, however long. It lacks vital states, and is as near nothing as it can be and not be that. On the contrary, have we many and fine movings of mind and heart, as we may suppose a seraph to abound in ideas and emotions of a high and delightful order? Then our life shall be rich and great, if it be short. Who has not before now found the morning set at an immeasurable distance from the evening, by the many

vicissitudes of the day? So much life in so brief a time quite deludes memory! This morning is a week old to the soul that has been through many scenes and experiences since its dawn. "A fortnight! what an eternity!" exclaimed Mariana to Wilhelm, in Goethe's mystical but charming story: a quick and fertile love had crowded the space with a world of thoughts, sentiments, dreams, fancies, and activities, so many and so happily full as to cause it to seem out of all proportion to the few fleeting days. Who does not frequently live two hours in one, or even better than that? And this is a miracle of sensibility. The cultivated and fervid spirit manufactures life with as much profusion as the sun breeds clouds. And of a great and vital nature, keen of sight and feeling, as an every-day advantage, the words of Thomas Fuller were fitly spoken: "In seventy or eighty years a man may have a deep gust of the world."

The importance of sensibility, or holding ourselves at our best, may be seen in the fact, which can never be too much dwelt on, that the world is ourselves over again, — thrown out, as it were, from our vital states; or, in other words, it is a birth from the loins of our higher being, and

true to its lineage. Has it not as many aspects as spectators? since every beholder is under some personal necessity of being its maker to the extent of its relations to himself. To the stone, which has no manufacturing power, it is a blank world, — that is, nothing; to the lower orders it must look quite small and meaningless; to cats it can be only a feline universe, and to dogs a canine; and to larks and lions it is but that which their interpreting nature permits it to be. And so to a Hottentot it is what his meagreness can make of it, and no more and no other; whilst to Plato it was great as his greatness could create it, and as diverse as the powers of his marvellous eye. The poetic sensibility suffuses the universe with a charming picturesqueness, as Johnson said of the poet of the Seasons, "He could not see two candles without forming a poetic image out of them." The poet lives in a finer world than other people. He overlays its prose with the ready poetry of his own spirit. His eyes, "larger, other eyes than ours," give roundness and ripple to all things. His fancy dresses the plain and enlivens the dull. To the spiritual the immensity is a spacious tabernacle filled with God or gods, and invites to a constant worship: whilst the un-

spiritual nowhere see a higher presence, but think the spaces are quite empty.

The practical man misses a thousand finer graces from Nature, but perpetually delights in the economies there displayed; that the means are so sure to the end; that so much is accomplished with so little fuss; and that the machinery is always well oiled. He sees what a fine scavenger the ocean is, coming up twice a day to the back doors of the cities and carting off, in a deodorizing brine, all filthy offences. He cannot too much dwell on the fact that water is so variously and widely useful, that it is good to drink, to have our hands clean, to run saw-mills, to make roads of perfect grade from inland to sea, to float clippers and steamers like shuttles between continents, and to save an army with watering-pots in our gardens and meadows. He thinks how many candles the sun dispenses with, and regards the night as very needful to the hired men and spent horses and oxen, — reminding one of the calculating Yankee who thought Niagara a fine place to wash sheep. Of this man it may be said, as of Wordsworth's Peter Bell, and of all hard, matter-of-fact men: —

> "The soft blue sky did never melt
> Into his heart; he never felt
> The witchery of the soft blue sky."

But here is our visionary, on whose stomach every thing practical lies hard as not meant for it, and who is under some constitutional bias toward "airy nothings." He sees forests as the home of nymphs; is a devotee of alchemy and astrology, to which chemistry and astronomy are as a farthing-candle to the sun; dreams dreams like an ancient divinator, and the more romantic they are, the more they are confided in; in short, he regards all things as what they are not. The humor of his eye, or his visual sensibility, unlike the practical man's, plays fantastical tricks and clothes the universe in miraculous forms and hues. To him there are no fairy stories, for these are his truths; he questions no myths; he sees chariots and horses, with marvellous trains, rushing through every sky, on all sorts of strange errands. What are the old plain truths and the verdicts of exact science, in his estimate, compared with those which are rapped out by spirits and established by the wild dance of tables! Where is there integrity like that of a hazel stick, or wisdom so wise and so much to the point as that which is found at the bottom of a teacup! His world is his own make, and indeed a marvel!

I once went into a friend's cupola that over-

looked the city and the sea and a broad horizon of hills, and found he had glass windows of several tints and various shadings, that he might gratify his moods, — possibly modify them a trifle. When he had on a verdant humor, he would run to the green outlook; when a saffron whim, he as promptly indulged it; again, a depression, begotten of an east wind, or late supper of pork and beans, or a fall in stocks, would send him to the blue lights; at another time he found himself invited to the dim religious shades; and, in seasons of ardency and glowing heat, he forsook all but the scarlet and crimson hues. But I thought how unphilosophical was this philosopher, since his own moods would supply adequate ochre, cochineal, logwood, indigo, jaundice, or what not, with which to decorate or daub the world. There is no painter like the soul, and its colors are instant and made on the spot. The eye is a fountain of hues.

So Montaigne said, "The feast is in the palate;" and it is evident, as a famous instance shows, that sublimity must be in the eye before it can be seen looming on mountain or ocean, — for whilst Byron, who "always liked to break his mind on something craggy," was gazing in

awe at Mont Blanc, from the Valley of Chamouni, he overheard an Englishwoman remark quite indifferently to her party, "Did you ever see any thing more rural?" And whoever watches visitors at Niagara cannot fail to detect that every one brings in his eye the Falls he sees; or, rather, that what they appear to one and another is a matter already decided by the order and measure of impressionability in each. And should we not always go unattended to the great scenes of nature, also to the masterpieces of art, — especially if we have natural and acquired gifts, — that our views may be entirely free and our sensibility unperverted? Should we not shake off the frivolous, the conceited, the cold, as we would exclude the profane from our altars? The high meaning of Coleridge's well-known lines will never be set aside: —

"We receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live;
Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud!
And would we aught behold of higher worth,
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor, loveless, ever-anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud,
Enveloping the earth.
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element."

Books, arts, men, and conversation share the fate that befalls the universe, from the presence of our creating and fashioning spirits, that must see so or so, and not otherwise. It was said, "Gibbon Gibbonized history;" and I suppose every one of us rubs his identity into the book he reads, or reads himself as much as his author, by being a sort of joint-composer. It would be difficult to say to what extent the meanings are the reader's, and not the writer's. We can believe that many an old author would be struck with wonder to know what wise meanings, beyond all his intentions, his modern commentator gets out of him, or puts into him. A high sensibility befriends greatly the pages it comes to, and all books have a heavy debt to their good readers. A better logic improves the argument; a more perfect imagination finishes the pictures. Only they who bring Bible to Bible, or a superior literary sense to literature, do them justice, or gladden themselves by their perusal. After reading one of Southey's sonnets, with a throbbing heart and eyes brimming with tears, Dr. Channing handed it to a lady, who read it and observed: "Doctor, I do think it is pretty." "Pretty!" exclaimed the great divine, with what of horror we may well imagine. But we

have only to remember that he and she found in the lines what they brought to them; whilst to one of conceivable lowness and stolidity they would have been utterly desert lines.

All written and spoken jests, as we well know, are quite lost on those natures that have not the jest-creating humor, but must regard every thing through their solemn directness as much like a statement under oath. They are jest-blind, as some are color-blind. They cannot discern, from constitutional defect, the jocular side of a story. It is a famous anecdote in this line, that of the young mother, who, amid her idolatry for her first-born, asked Charles Lamb, the incorrigible but facetious bachelor, how he liked babies, and when he replied, "Boiled, ma'am," she thought him a cannibal who should be straightway banished to the Fejee Islands.

Music is made by the skill and sensibility of the listener, who takes the atmospheric motions supplied him and works them up the best he can. The instrument and voice furnish, as it were, raw material, and the final manufacture is in the ear and the soul, and according to their music-making capacity and habit; as one man can make a good shoe, and another only a bad, out of the same piece of leather. Woe to the

party that goes to the opera and is not prepared to carry the opera; for such an one will find what a fellow-sufferer has called "the measured malice of music." Dr. Johnson thought that if he were to enjoy music, even in heaven, a new sense must be given him; and he signified his rough disrelish by replying to a woman who asked him if he did not think it was wonderful that so many tunes could be made from eight notes, — "No, I don't think it wonderful; but I wish it had been impossible." Walter Scott shared a similar defect. He only claimed to have a "reasonable good ear for a jig, but that solos and sonatas gave him the spleen." And we have it from Julian Charles Young, the son of the tragedian, who spent a short season at Abbotsford, that "a young lady in the house sang divinely; but her singing gave Scott no pleasure."

We know that a bad mill makes bad flour of the best wheat; whilst a fine power of grinding and bolting renders another result for our tables. And human nature is a laboratory with an equal dependence on itself for the way the world is worked up, the soul being a prime factor in all vision, interpretation, and conclusion, and setting a personal stamp on action. The *ego* intrudes

in all we think and say and do. No man can escape himself. Character crops out and changes all things to its own complexion. Mrs. Siddons's tragic genius turned the world into a stage, and, we are told, she stabbed her potatoes and ordered a broth with a histrionic air. And not less does the spirit tell for itself in you and me, and give shape and color to events; and he who would have a new universe must first make himself over, and become another man.

Another miracle of sensibility is seen in the magic power it exerts over others. There is no limit to be set to the sway of the kindled and earnest life; as if it drew infinitude into its service, or it were such a charm to yield to its magnetism that we cannot and would not resist. The enchanted are ever the enchanters. Momus never misses his gift, nor Apollo, nor any one else. The lawyer who has most of vital heat has the jury; and even the judge, in spite of himself, falls under the spell, as the bird plays into the jaws of the snake. The wide-awake boy or man is given the lead in all enterprises and adventures. The battle may be lost; but some enthusiastic general, like Montluc or Sheridan, arrives on the ground and charges every soldier with his own courage and force

— like multiplying himself by tens of thousands — and the tide is turned. Sydney Smith easily enough overcame the most dubious gravity with his volumes of wit; and every wag is a house-warmer wherever he comes, and sets the most glum silence into an uproar. When Whitefield begged for charity, with his whole being frantic, misers unbuttoned their pockets; and so cool a man as Dr. Franklin was lucky in not having his whole estate along with him, to throw into the contribution-box. Aflame with an idea, Peter the Hermit melted Europe into the frenzy of consent, and drew on the Crusades. These are examples of the supremacy of sensibility, whose magic wand touches and controls us daily, for good or evil, — in the orator's voice, or the friend's persuasions, or the beggar's appeals. What wilt thou have, my precious enthusiast? Time, toil, money, tears, submission, the surrender of reason, or my body for the pillory or the flames? Take them, and be welcome. It was said that when Brahma walked the earth, the gold in its veins exclaimed, "Here am I, O most Eminent! take me, and do with me as thou wilt." So we hasten to offer ourselves, body and soul, to the magnet of high emotion; and may have need next year, or sooner, to return on our too hasty steps.

And it would almost seem that all those objects about which we apply ourselves, the materials upon which we work, such as wood and stone, brass and iron, truth and art, facts and fancies, have a voluntary regard for the spirit of genius; for the inspired workman finds a sort of mysterious concurrence on their part — as it were, an advance to meet him half way, and a desire to fall in with his purpose — that the uninspired does not. The best work, of every kind, is done with heat and a freedom from painful effort, is a vital more than a mechanical operation; and there can be only low results in the absence of high feeling. "Authors' moods" are proverbial; and what heavy prices are paid for them I need not say. The haymakers find a little stimulation at "'leven o'clock" sharpens the scythe or softens the grass, and makes an acre look less than it is. The work in the kitchen goes on well if there is spirit for it, and ill if there is not. We all know the value of the social impulse in society, and with what stammering and discredit we come off without it, forgetting our best thoughts and fine vocabulary, and furnishing but a modicum of stale bread to the invited feast. Honey-bees will yield everything to this man, and sting the next; and

there seems to be a like favoritism in all nature. What partiality among the stupid fish toward your hook, or mine! How game puts itself in the way of Nimrod, and is out of the way before Benedict comes near! But the secret of all success is an inspiration in the work in hand, which makes a jack-knife and gimlet better than a kit of tools to a dullard.

Once more, it is feeling that rounds us into persons, one by one, and into groups socially. Temperament breaks up the uniformity of society and groups us on the score of like and like. Our magnetisms unite us. If we have nothing in common, we shall be quite indifferent to each other; or, like all opposites, we shall repel and fly asunder. My solitude is more companionable than the presence of ten or a thousand who do not belong to me by deeper sympathies. And unless in every party and neighborhood the social distribution is a free process, and according to this higher law, there shall be no ease or satisfaction of intercourse. What is yours you will find and enjoy, and what is not yours you will gladly leave to him whose it may be; and it may happen that this inclusion and exclusion shall drive one and another into the corner to sit alone. And if it is contended that this is

undemocratic and ill-usage of fellow-guests, we must reply, it is idle to hold a quarrel with gravitation that groups stars and souls alike.

> "For sparks electric only strike
> On souls electrical alike;
> The flash of intellect expires,
> Unless it meet congenial fires."

Decorum and even a degree of tenderness, on high grounds, are due to all, — yes, to bores who come when they are not wanted and stay till the crack of doom, and to fribbles and triflers who chaffer in the face of every solemnity; but all Nature, tugging at her own, and seeking the congenial alliances, excuses us from forced social connections. It is a broad privilege, with the highest sanction, this of "jackdaw to jackdaw" and emmet to emmet. The whole world is giving us this text daily. The affinities of sensibility are to be guarded by reason, but are not to be denied, since they are better guides than our wits, and carry the prophecy of the best society in respect of variety and elevation. All miscellaneous life must be low and unpoetic; and, shall we not say, without the best moral tone? Spare us the feeling that is elective and fastidious, and that draws us out of and above a Chinese uniformity! Let me seek and reject

whom I must, with this sure sense of my being; and I will honor him who covets or shuns me. For this he also has right and title in his constitution, as well as in the better results that will follow.

In short, the sharing of a high degree of fine feeling, since it fills the time and place with a happy sufficingness, multiplying and magnifying vital conditions to our hearts' content, will save all need of running after sensations. It is the grace that helps us to stay at home with more of realization and relish than any who have it not can find in travel. It renews Eden under any sky. It makes life seem great and worth the while, and reconciles us to our being and lot. We weary of dulness, but a fulness of better emotions breeds contentment; and we would stay, like Peter, where the sacred tide so abounds. Paradise will be happily busy, and therefore we shall not want to run away. The rapt student forgets to go to bed till somebody blows out his candle. "Twelve o'clock! why, I thought it was just in the edge of the evening," says the enchanted visitor, and haltingly asks for his hat.

But how shall we reach an eminent vitality, and its better wit and succession of transports?

How are we to hold ourselves at the top of our emotional condition? How have our batteries charged?

The first requisite is a large share of quiet and repose in our habits, to admit of a healthy and full state of nerves, senses, animal spirits, and of the finer reservoirs, — mind, heart, and soul. There is not only more dignity but better feeling in a serene bearing and a life of pauses and waiting. Some of the best things are not overtaken by pursuit, will not condescend to a man out of breath, hate and fly the insanity of haste, refuse to fellowship with exhaustion; and few will need to be told that among these best things is a perfect degree of sensibility. By too much whirl we are jaded and benumbed. Overwork leads to underfeeling. Weariness has an effect like morphine. I noticed that our party who walked up Mt. Washington from the Glen House, and squandered their powers, had much less of rapture on the summit than those who rode up: we saw with a blur, and felt after a sluggish fashion, or were lying around the stove asleep, whilst the others were on the fresh run for views, and abounding with emotions; that is, we had fool-

ishly saved three dollars, and lost the clouds and the most sublime of the sublimities. It is the testimony of generals that tired soldiers are much less capable of patriotic feelings and military pride, and are unfit to meet the ardor and courage of fresh troops. Excess of study dazes the brain, and the idler is often the better scholar, as having his powers highly charged and in full play; and so eloquence is not more facts gathered by incessant delving, but more feeling drawn from the open sky and the genial walk. The unfinished sermon that steals the minister's sleep on Saturday night makes prolific return to his congregation on Sunday; and the man who walks five miles to worship is a bad worshipper at church, however devout he may be at home, for piety moves with the blood, or the Holy Ghost respects a high state of health. To come to the social circle from too many toils and cares, from the hours of hard work, is to incur the discredit of dotage and senility in early life, with our heavy eyes and stupid "yes" and "no" in the conversation. If my friend comes a long way to see me, and has spent a day and a night in the cars without sleep, I will shake hands with him and send him to bed, and turn the key on him for twenty-four hours;

when, if he sleeps well and recovers himself, he will be fit to be seen. Every one is reduced to punk and deadness by too much exertion, as a waste of vital heat in warming our bed leaves us cold, or squandering it on an arctic or Alpine temperature draws on stupor and death. The wise miller husbands his headwater,—has the gate shut more than it is open, to keep the desired fulness; and there should be equal economy with the tide of life, if we would not be empty cisterns.

What means this demand of our time for sensational feats? Why has a flash literature, having neither beauty nor depth, crowded out a better, and become a sort of necessity with our readers? Why does some loud and vulgar-mouthed quack in the pulpit, where culture and grace should alone be permitted, or on the rostrum, get a hearing that wisdom and worth like St. Paul's could not command? Why must our theatres forsake the high and pure drama, which was once in vogue and ample, and have instead fireworks, nakedness, bar-room bluster, monkey shows, and endless rout of claptrap, wherewith to draw and entertain our ladies and gentlemen? What means this morbid demand for extravaganza, as if sound was not sound till it becomes

uproar, nor color color till it reaches the extreme that has effect with savages? Our politics have become dramatic and puerile, a matter of torch-lights, paper lanterns, boyish trappings, and stump-speeches by Tom, Dick, and Harry, whose only outfit is one of lungs, — as if citizens were short of brains, and would vote with the party that sounds the most trumpets; as if, in fact, the patriotic nerve were so nearly dead that our republicans stand in need of being played on by galvanic batteries to break their stupor. We noticed, at the Coliseum, that a fine symphony had a rather feeble effect, and our weary populace took the time to yawn and subside into vacancy; but the Anvil Chorus pounded them into some degree of wakefulness, and life came once more into their eyes and faces. There has come to be a necessity for extremes in the fashions, or the point is lost; for both the wearer and the observer are devoid of that better sense of the eye that notes the truly artistic and fit in costumes. And it was without surprise that we learned of a young lady who, sharing the low dull sense of the time for beauty, exchanged her modest diamonds, at the dollar-store, for a quantity of showy glass and gilt. We seem to be fast settling into a state

that responds only to the firing of cannons and bray of trumpets, or lapsing into a lower animal condition, a sort of rhinoceros stupor, which is moved only by red-hot irons or melted pitch. The growing demand for sensations betrays our present sad lapse; and who shall tell the consequent loss to the race of the finest and best elements of life.

In other words, I accuse the age of a criminal weariness and exhaustion, through its stress of competitions, cares, running to and fro, and habitual overwork; and so, as the sot loses his acute taste, and must have brandy and burning-fluid to raise an appreciable effect, we who have dulled the proper and desirable keenness and quickness of our impressionability crave the vulgar degrees in all things. We are spent, and why should we not be dull? Our night has not its olden quiet; our day is not peaceful as once; our life is fretted and worn and wasted; crushed out and cut short in its midst, it may be; offered up to Pluto and the Furies; and thus, devoid of a composed and sensitive fulness, it is but a poor, played-out, and cheap life. We rush through and die, giving ourselves no healthy and invigorating leisure by the way; and let us hope when we are utterly out of breath we shall then have

time to breathe, and enter leisurely, as we should, into more vital and precious relations with the universe. But why not have some serenity and poetic transports every day? Why not now slacken into *greater* speed? Are we not like the insane crowd, whose rush to get out of church only hinders? If we attempted to live less, should we not live more and better, as the artist's frequent throwing aside of his brush, to recover fresh spirit and power, is his only hope of merit? Weariness is weakness, and must have two days instead of one; and all its victories will be indifferent, a little below the best, force-puts, and not free and abounding thoughts and deeds. The finest crystals come quick, from the full life of Nature. Our railroads have found it economy of machinery to make less speed and take more time; but our men and women drive the wheels of their being at a fatal pace, and are spent at forty. The game is then up with them. There is no more appetite or keen zest. To spare is to gain; but they learn the secret too late.

It is also a condition we must respect, to the end of the best measures of spirit and power, — I mean self-reliance, and, if need be, non-conformity. It is pitiful, the amount of feeling

and vital being that are bartered for custom and established usage. The play is largely carried on outside of us, and is a dull performance. Let us be crushed into the popular type, however absurd, as the "heathen Chinee" has his foot, or wadded and padded to the pattern which is just now in style! Teach us the attitudes and draw us into exact line with the rank and file, ye friendly powers! and we will ask no question about the cost in the fine coin of Nature and precious experiences! Spare us from being original and true to ourselves! But self-fidelity and freedom are the price of genuine and gladdening feeling. The emotions flow best in their native channels, as rubber and tar are fluent in the tree, but harden in any artificial duct. We do nothing heartily and happily that we do not do honestly, with a single eye and perfect self-reliance. If our faith and word and act are our own, as the flower belongs to the stem, or the limb to the body, then shall they seem deep and full, and it may be of infinite value as bringing us into fellowship with the ages and the stars; but if they are only echoes and imitations we shall fall asleep under their influence, and to-morrow awake in the likeness of all sceptics who have tried to hold faith at sec-

ond hand. The lawyer never makes his best plea on the wrong side of the case, since he is thus displaced from his active centre and sense of justice which, as it were, would make the cause his own, and his words above a money value.

A company of personalities, each true to itself, is a great social success: here shall be beauty, poetry, heat, volumes of real feeling; but overshadow and reduce them by some whim of ceremonial usage, — that is, draw on mannerism, — and no affair could be more stupid. They are now only wax figures and puppets; and would fall to yawning, if that also were not an undue freedom and comfort. One often wishes, in such cramp and benumbed condition, that somebody would have a hysterical fit, or overturn a table, or knock a vase or two off the mantel, or do some other charitable act to make us forgetful and free, and set us once more at our ease and joy. Conformity often holds the flow of emotions as ice does the flow of waters, and the likeness in the two cases extends even to temperature.

Nature is sensitive in every fibre and filament, is all life and genial flow; and so every one's proneness must be allowed its own way, or subjected to the fewest checks possible, in order

to his best feeling. Let the poet sing his songs, the explorer have his ships and furnishings and long voyages, the hero his blood-stirring and hair-lifting ventures, the scientist his bugs and bottles, the jockey his old horses, the wag his waggery, the lazy their easy seats, lovers their secluded stroll and the moonlight, the scholar his library; and all hands, save thieves and sots, as much of what they want as can be furnished. Let us even be tender of this man's conceit and that woman's caprice; for, if we indulge them, our own liberty is a little securer, and we all live much in some pet crotchet or obstinate freak which, like an unsightly wart, is a part of us. Let those have poodles and rabbits who can enjoy them; and if your friend takes to rattlesnakes, humor his liking and keep him a little ahead in every wild tramp, — what is his relish may prove your rescue. We can never too much admire how the Greeks respected Diogenes in his tub, and Socrates in his old coat. If Madame Bloomer will wear bloomers, we can afford to let her have this pleasure, and only betray by how much she is our superior if we condescend to sneer or join the boys who run after her on the street. It was a great advance of law when there came to be no law

concerning creeds and costumes and customs, but all people came to be protected alike in their good sense and vagaries, since this was a step gained in favor of nature and sensibility. Liberty is the key to life. The wild strawberry has the better flavor, and quart for quart will drive your forced Seedlings and Hoveys from the table. The country youth is beautiful as a fawn on the hills, but is dwarfed in a city parlor. The best livers in the land are the born and bred yeomen, so long as they keep to their rural instincts and habits; but they are smitten with a lingering death the moment they move to New York or Paris, and try to be fashionable at Saratoga and Long Branch. Indeed! Here is Jonas asleep at the soirée, and Patience has heedlessly dropped her domino at the masquerade!

My style is not yours. Your problem is not mine. Personalities are as various as the people are numerous, as there are no two leaves alike in all the forest. And the short and sure road to dulness and death is a forced conformity. "Hands off!" is what every soul must sternly say to all who would divert and drag it to some other end, if it would be and do its best; for in that in which it naturally differs lies its hope of superiority.

Furthermore, the better feelings are set in play by the favoring influences that surround them, as music is drawn by running the fingers over the key-board. We daily observe the happy effect of occasions, — friends, books, sermons, clouds, pictures and statues, flowers and waves; for —

> "Spirits are not finely touched
> But to fine issues."

The most signal fact of our being is its impressionability, as if we were perfect harps waiting to be breathed upon. Our nature is mobile and reactionary. We answer to frictions, as two sticks may be rubbed to a flame. Our responsiveness is something marvellous, and not without peril, as exposing us to tortures and temptations; whilst it is the source of what constant and various delights! Every sense lies open to the world and gives a swift report; certifies us of our surroundings; knows sweet from bitter, soft from hard, the blue sky from the black cloud, the flute and harp from the dinner-gong; and happy they who respect the choice of the senses. But not less is the soul conscious, and unprotected. It always knows where it is, and with whom; and all things are its occasions.

Would you see what conversation does? Observe that knot of excited men on the corner of the street, who met without any flow in their blood or color on their faces, but have now got the full tide on, and tongues and elbows all going at once. Whose languor will not a lyric, read or sung, refresh like a cup of sparkling water? Is not Shakespeare the best of all tonics? The notes of the flute, floating on the night air, make us superior to sleep. The ring of the door-bell and the announcement of a friend draw us out of our after-dinner nap, and we exchange a dead hour for a living one, with some degree of gratitude toward the intruder. We yield to small matters of influence as to magic, which may well lead us to hope that, even when the apparently strongest persuasions fail, there is some adaptive trifle that shall succeed; and that there is a key, if we can but find it, to every heart, as Achilles was vulnerable in his heel, and Baldur the son of Odin could be hit with an arrow of mistletoe. May it not be that the conversion of the worst soul, and drawing on of its lost purity, is after all an easy affair, if we but knew the secret of time and instrument? It is said of an Italian bandit, hardened by years of robbery, that, chancing to hear a parrot pronounce the name

of his mother, it overwhelmed him with memories and emotions, gave instant supremacy to his earlier and better habits, and sent him straightway to her whose name thus opportunely and strangely sounded had saved him. How the soul answers to a home-strain of music in a foreign land! A chance note of the nightingale or whippoorwill often surprises us into an intense sensibility. What! in tears that a ray of sunlight has strayed into the parlor and fallen on some precious keepsake! Even so. A word may be greater than an oration. Omnipotence is in this or that trifle, and our whole being thrills at its touch. And this is a revelation of our wonderful accessibility, and an advice to find favoring relations, as we set the harp in the wind.

It was the morning sun that daily awoke Memnon's statue to music; and the old fable has an ever new application, for still the rosy dawn of the day inspires song, and any advent of beauty and grace has a kindred value. Who does not find fresh air very favorable to buoyancy of spirits? An open window is often a means of more grace and better prayers, — which led an impious preacher of our time to claim that the "Holy Ghost is nothing but oxygen." The celebrated

landscape painter, Claude, filled his eye with new beauty and his soul with fresh emotion every time he visited Nature, and hastened back to his canvas to transfix the vision and glow; and I suppose all hearts answer back to the hills and valleys, have other and higher emotions when face to face with them, which is the reason, no doubt, that the ancients thought there must be finer presences here, — divinities, muses, nymphs, and genii, — and that poets and philosophers and sages should come out from the close and stifled air of cities, and write and teach in groves. There is certainly no better fortune than to be set into close union with Nature, and yield our life lovingly to her charged batteries. There is grace for us in her breath. Gardens and grass-plats serve well to stir the gentler and finer feelings which befit our every-day needs; and our suburbans have an untold advantage over our city populations. But the shovel and hoe and rake cannot make the earth grand and moving. Our hearts crave the rough and untamed world, to draw on their latent energies and strong emotions. What stirs us like the mountains, Niagara, the prairie, the ocean, and the midnight heavens? What sets us at our best like the solitudes of forest and lake? as if a

better genius took charge of us and gave us other and higher secrets. And we must not neglect these wild favors, and only sip at the honey-dew on the hedges and flowers at our front doors.

Our modern life seems to want poetic range through Nature's better provinces. It is too much withdrawn into a domain of petty details. The aboriginal world is likely to be lost to our civilization, and with it the race of heroes and saints. Our wisdom is weakness. We are becoming cosmopolitan dwarfs, city dolls, slaves to the trivial and frivolous, which our arts have multiplied beyond all need; and we should be set back into simpler and rougher ways, and bred anew to plain and strong habits of thought and feeling. Our parlors belittle us, and we need to be driven out to suck life from the full and flowing pores of the universe.

Even our science limits and restrains to dry and dusty specimens and the details of the terrestrial carpentry, noting where are the joints, and how many pieces in the mechanism, and in what way they can be taken apart and put together again. It is a sign of the loss of sensibility and better appreciation, when we count the stamens of the painted flower instead of

catching the floral influence, which is the main thing, as the soul is more than the body, or the spirit than the letter. But are we not subjecting Nature to a similar cold enumeration and analysis? It is a universe of powers, and not of names; but modern science looks as if set up too exclusively in the interest of dissection and lower discoveries, — a *post-mortem* treatment of a dead Nature. It takes note of statics at the expense of dynamics: it is all eye for the mechanical, but shares a blunted sense of the spiritual and real.

What is worse than an empty and pretentious nomenclature, — a botany of terms and not of powers and graces, or a geology of dust that ignores divinity? Is it not like the study of poetry with an eye to scanning and metre simply? or architecture, with reference only to its perpendiculars and horizontals? Is it not as if one should see in the tears that bead themselves on the cheek, what science has lately defined them: "Water rendered slightly saline by common salt, and containing also a little albumen combined with soda"? It may be true still that "the deceived are wiser than the undeceived." The clouds are more to the poet or the peasant or the child than to the exact scholar who reads

out the illusion. If to know more is to know less, then spare us the negative wisdom. Leave us our primers, if you must take with them our first fresh sense of the world. At any rate, science shall render small service if it do not foster our higher sensibilities and give us a living and speaking world, with God immanent in every atom and process.

Some one has said, "If you would seek life, seek it not." But I think it was better sense in the boy who, being accosted by a comrade as to his errand, said, "I'm going after fun." Our waiting hearts suggest our duty in this matter of finding the best and most promising relations. We must seek life. We must hunt for this fine game. We must strive to have ourselves set at our best. Shall we not come out under the sky and into the sunshine? Shall we not stroll in the September moonlight, give a frequent hour to a friend, hang some more pictures on our walls, go to the opera, take a solitary or social walk, as we need and can best enjoy, keep a carriage, cultivate flowers or fish or hens, or do a thousand things, just to gain one more happy beat of life's pulse? Is not our heedlessness of the conditions much to our detriment and discredit?

Let me, in conclusion, commend Mr. Emerson's lesson, in these significant lines, as one we may well heed: —

> "Was never form and never face
> So sweet to Seyd as only grace,
> Which did not slumber like a stone,
> But hovered gleaming and was gone.
> Beauty chased he everywhere,
> In flame, in storm, in clouds of air.
> He smote the lake to feed his eye
> With the beryl beam of the broken wave;
> He flung the pebbles in to hear
> The moment's music which they gave."

II.

OUR ELECT.

"We were so close within each other's breast,
The rivets were not found that join'd us first.
That does not reach us yet: we are so mix'd,
As meeting streams, — both to ourselves were lost.
We were one mass, we could not give or take,
But from the same: for he was I; I, he."

DRYDEN.

"Old friends, like old swords, still are trusted best."

WEBSTER'S DUCHESS OF MALFY.

"Turn him, and see his threads: look, if he be
Friend to himself, that would be friend to thee;
For that is first requir'd, a man be his own;
But he that 's too much that is friend to none."

BEN JONSON.

COMPANIONSHIP is an ever-lessening and rising ring; begins with the crowd on the street, and ends with the elect, which is often a company of two, — a double self: such pairs as Damon and Pythias, Beaumont and Fletcher, Tennyson and Hallam, and the two school-girls, who for the present recline and dally in each other's arms, and like Juno's swans are never seen apart.

The social instinct in ripening severs and withdraws, as the tree ascends and matures by

shedding its lower limbs. Its history is parallel to that of reproduction, where the count lessens as the type rises, until, on the best levels, the births narrow to three, two, and one. Nature mounts by limitations, or attempts less to accomplish more. The heart obeys this law of ascent, and comes to the best relations by a system of exclusions, as the orator is successful with emphasis by sparing on the mass of words and concentrating on a few. That which is finite can be great only in this way. And so we can readily agree with Aristotle, who said, "He who boasts a multitude of friends hath none;" or, with Saadi, in his witty observation, that "friendship, like iron, is fragile, if hammered too thin; and as for heat, holds it not."

Companionship begins with the crowd on the sidewalk, as we have said; but only begins. With a few there is not even this dawn of fellowship, as of the first gray of the morning. Rather, they stand in the mass as repellant units. They are the victims of some idiosyncrasy or whim or conceit that banishes them to their own centres. At the other end of the scale are those who, like Socrates and Goldsmith, have their arms around everybody with the utmost good-will. They greet humanity as

a lover his beloved. They are apparently as impartial as the sun, and as broad in their benignity as Providence. Shall we say they have some higher gift, and see the beautiful human type under every diversity? Or do they not, rather, hold all human traits in such happy distribution in their own characters that they instantly find points of sympathy with all they meet? But most of us find in the crowd only glances of fellowship, the genial contact and recognition of a few eyes, the magnetic touch of now and then a heart, like sunny beams through rifts in a cloud.

Between kindred souls there takes place at sight a fine flow of feeling, a mutual intelligence and adoption, which lingers like a poetic thrill. There are choice faces to be met in every crowd, which stay in our memory like an image impressed on the eye. They come again in our dreams. A regret steals over us at their passing, as if some damage had been done to our hearts. They invest the sidewalk with a charm, and often we may be forced to forsake a circle of dull acquaintances to enjoy this better companionship of strangers on the street or in the public assembly.

The wayside companionships, when drawn

into closer relations, as may happen in travel, or at the house of a mutual friend, or at an evening's entertainment, or in the chance ways of life, will eclipse, for the moment, the glow of better grounded friendships. They are the rare outbursts of the social nature — rapt climaxes of thought and feeling. In the meeting of two strangers timed to each other is found, no doubt, the most perfect poetry and power of our social life. All the tides are set in full flow. It is a holiday with our faculties and sentiments. A new companion of this elect order we meet as on Olympus or in Elysian Fields. For, let it be said, these are times and opportunities to enjoy anew what is at length excluded among old friends. Long intimacy narrows the topics, demands silences, forbids even our pet points. "Go to! I have heard this before," is the unspoken verdict that will be respected. The old is old, between friend and friend; and we must spare on these things, and pass on to the new, though it be to discuss the latest nothings of the day, and prognosticate what idle events are due to-morrow. Our best story must not be retold to the same party, however intimate the relations, — indeed, because they are intimate. The familiar theme

may burn in our heart, but it must be kept from the tongue, as a lover painfully hides his maiden's name. But we may draw the gate at these casual interviews, and hold nothing back; for then all is new. And here, moreover, is the charm of two lives in a state of mutual transfer of ideas and sympathies: it is a fine game of surprises. What delight to watch the new phases as they come! What joy in this fresh chapter of life which we are writing out for each other! Let us run to our journal and make record of another ecstasy, and declare for the hundredth time that one more ordinary mortal has proved to be an angel! In looking over my old diary, the other day, I was attracted by the heading, "A happy discovery in a horse-car!" which proved to be the rare wit and virtue of a man I had long known at a distance, only to deem him a very common specimen of our race.

But whilst in some things this is the social climax, it is not of that perfect order which the best degree of friendship secures. The meteor is a bad substitute for the fixed star, however we run to greet it for the moment. The heat of the new birth is something suspicious, as suggesting a speedy burning out. Is there not a pas-

sional play in these wayside intoxications; and, in most cases, a slight dash of mutual conceit and curiosity? Have we not exchanged too fine portraits, and left each other somewhat deceived by disclosures better than our average? Has it not been a meeting in costume, and a hiding of our rags? I know I am not what my chance companion takes me to be; and he appears to me in a holiday disguise. The dealing is not wholly plain and fair, like that which takes place when old friends meet and have on their every-day qualifications; and the truest conscience would like to say at parting, "I am not the angel you fancy I am." Have we not a secret wish, or something like it, not to meet these parties again on whose easy faith we have so finely imposed, lest next time they will see through us and accuse us? Would we like to have these dupes know the real facts?

The companionships among neighbors, and in clubs, coteries, churches, and every kind of permanent and close association, have still better qualities. If there is not in them so much of an April freshness, there is more of an October ripeness. The views of each other are broader, the familiarity is more assured and justified, and the good-will and mutual interest are the

more solid and refined products of time. These are happy free-masonries, and enchantments of the social landscape which do not pass away whilst you are gazing. We miss any face from these groups. We ask with anxiety, where is the old man whose benignant face has daily passed our window for years, and now is seen no more? as if our familiar, friendly glances had mutually surrendered us to each other. We follow any of these better known and better loved parties in their travails or travels with our benisons. We hasten to exchange sympathies and congratulations. We pause as we read their names in the daily papers, and would know how it fares with them. We gladly confess our debt to them for the speed and joy of many an hour which had else been wingless and sober. And from this better grade of fellowship usually springs the highest and best.

But what is friendship? What is this final state of the social instinct which has been for ages the subject of discussion, as if it transcended easy definition, and the theme of song, as if it were entitled to the highest tribute and celebration? What is this that one has called the "chief joy of souls"? When does the swelling bud break into its perfect bloom? A child

may raise this question, but have we the man who is sure of his answer? Of all the arrows shot by the host of archers at this old mark has any gone further than Cicero's? His definition is virtually this: Friendship is the mutual embrace and intercourse of corresponding attributes, qualities, tastes, aspirations, with an absence from them of a jealous and envious egotism; or it is the sweet accord of natures akin, and especially of natures of a high order, cultivated, moral, generous, plain, stable, and with some degree of poetic sympathy. The first law is likeness, with elevation as a guaranty of a superior type of amity, as diamonds are more perfect crystals than quartz; and the second is unselfishness or magnanimity, which admits two of a kind to come into full relations. "Whoever is in possession of a true friend," wrote this great Roman, "sees the counterpart of his own soul." And upon this note he rings repeated changes. He plants himself here like one who stands on hardpan. "A friend is another self," he adds; and this saying has been quoted with favor by Montaigne, Shaftesbury, Sir Thomas Browne, and others. "Friendship is one soul in two bodies," is another of his happy hits, which the writers have freely adopted. And the origin of this

state he announces in the following terms: "To have similar likes and dislikes is the first cement of friendship."

But Cicero was not alone among the ancients, neither was he first, in holding this view. For in Plato's Gorgias, Socrates is set forth as saying, "To me every man appears to be most the friend of him who is most like him, — like to like, as the ancient sages say." Did he quote the priests of Isis, or whom? In his fine chapter, "How to know a Flatterer from a Friend," Plutarch has said, "Friendship takes origin from a concurrence of like humors and inclinations; and the same passions, the same aversions and desires, are the first cement of a true and lasting friendship." "Equality and similarity," according to Aristotle, "constitute friendship;" whilst Homer, in the translation which I have at hand, is thus rendered: —

> "Heaven with a secret principle endued
> Mankind to seek their own similitude."

Every hero knows every hero from primal sources of wisdom: they see eye to eye, as we say; and there arise mutual interest and esteem on the most central conditions, which will ripen to a fine friendship with a heroic flavor if circum-

stances should permit. Great generals of the opposition would rush into each other's arms and hobnob on the eve of battle, but for prudential ends. On personal grounds they would each give the victory to the other. The ancient legends are for ever pairing and grouping the heroes. In the Norse theology Valhalla is their common heaven, or, rather, the heaven of as many of them as are slain in battle. The valiant brotherhood were invited to that high and exclusive fellowship for which their common nature and experience so eminently fit them. Where but in the Court of King Arthur, and at his famous Round Table,

"Heroes to heroes facing,"

should we look for the intrepid Sir Kay, Sir Galahad, Sir Tristram, Sir Gawain, Sir Bohort, Sir Lionel, and all the elect of daring blood? Their union is in full accord with the first law of Nature, and begotten of it, and is a supreme joy. It is magnetic, and sweet as nectar. And with not less of reason did the Orientals marry their fabulous hero and heroine: "Who but Temeenah, the daughter of the Shah, and tamer of lions and tigers, should be wife to Roostem, that makest the air to weep

with his sword; in dread of whom the eagle ventures not to fly; and who drawest the sea-snake out of the deep?" The match is thus perfect, like the balance of the solar system, or the due equipoise of nations; and we see, at a glance, what a train of interchanging intelligences, respects, and sympathies must follow. Unlikeness of tastes and habits and tempers is the rock on which the domestic ship is oftenest wrecked; and Temeenah and Roostem are given as a high text to be applied to wedlock through all grades of society.

Thus every quality knows and seeks its own, its fellow and peer; that is, if the quality is itself high and self-respecting, and there is an absence of selfishness and jealousy. Hence, child takes to child, through mutual sparkle and innocence; veteran to veteran, on grounds of well-earned laurels; the pure to the pure, as sunbeams blend or angels go in flocks; the plain and solid people to such as share a kindred good-sense and fair-dealing; and poet to poet, as Aubrey informs us that "there was a wonderful similarity of fancy between Beaumont and Fletcher, which caused that dearness of friendship between them."

We will not stand pledged for the good-fellow-

ship of blacklegs, fribbles, fashionables, gamesters, politicians, speculators, or other self-seekers, by reason of any similarity between them. We will not guarantee the amity of a red-hair club because of this common color; nor of a sewing-circle, because it is composed of only women; nor of West Point graduates in the army, because they have a kindred skill in military tactics. It is not a question of likeness without reference to rank; for where there is not self-respect, there cannot be mutual respect among those of a kind. We demur at Addison's statement, that "the friendships of the world are often confederacies in vice." For this divine league runs not so low. The perfect co-ordinations are worthy. Friends shall be able to look each other in the face without mutual crimination. We must not feel ashamed of our company, and have a desire to apologize and run. This high cohesion is as moral as gravitation or the Ten Commandments; and not, in any instance, a bond among rogues or rascals, who, for some paltry pittance, will desert as readily as they enlist.

Beau Nash was badly fleeced by his sharp friends at York, who offered fifty pounds of his money back if he would stand a half-hour in a

sheet at the door of the cathedral. Whilst doing so, he was recognized by a priest, who rallied him on his strange behavior. The dupe replied that he was "doing a Yorkshire penance for having bad friends." But who will fare better that angles in this treacherous water? He who mates with sharpers, though he be himself a two-edged blade, must expect to do penance sooner or later. Nothing is to be counted on where there is absence of moral principle, — not the love of a mother, nor the affection of a father, nor the pledged fealty of a church-member. It is virtue that gives soundness and security to all the sentiments; and he who has companions without it should have buttons to his pockets.

There is no love like self-love. But this is among the high-minded and virtuous. For who of these does not prize his own nature and tastes and hopes, to that extent that he would not exchange them for any others? Who would sell himself out for any mortal he knows? We are all egotists to this degree, that we would not barter our lots, all in all, with crowned heads and millionnaires. Especially the worthy will have self-regards that shall set them at the very centre of the universe. And so there will be no

extension of love like that which shall remain most like self-love.

That to which my heart is most given in my own nature is that to which in another my chief interest turns, and my highest attachment will be transferred. I vibrate, like a sensitive string, to my favorite notes, by whomsoever they are struck. I embrace my own in all, since that is most dear to me. For this reason, my new friends will seem like my old ones, and as if I had long known them. My preference will be for a common type of character; and my companions would be instantly at home with each other. I cannot make any choice but from the same general rank, and any others would be speckled birds in this flock: it is a process of self-extension; and my last friendship is, therefore, not a new one, for the reason that the same essential qualities reoccur in it. I know not how to escape from my own nature in any act, and much less in any act of the heart; and so my friend is but some more of my own personality. I have always known him, although I first saw him yesterday; and if he leaves me to-morrow, he is still mine, as carrying my identity and sympathy. We have nothing new for each other, save a few indifferent scraps of

autobiography; but that which is old between us is never old, but, like beauty, it is youthful and a joy for ever.

If I never fall sick of myself, — as I shall not, if I am moral, and have elevation of mind, and feel just and gladdening relations to the universe; if I am vital and real to myself, — then shall I never fall sick of my friend, who is like me. These qualities can never weary me for their fitness to my being. They are like beauty to the eye, sweet sounds to the ear, or adapted viands to the taste. The relations are perfect and charming. Without end my friend shall bring me to my better self, and I shall recall him from his eccentric and cheap associations to his true centre; and the sun shall sooner cease than this mutual glow of our hearts, so long as we remain what we are. For there is no monotony in the interplay of like and like on this plane, but a perpetual miracle of newness. Human nature never tires at the top, but only at its base. It is passion that cloys, as somewhat that is rank and from the ground; but the finer sentiments, which are one with divinity, will for ever rejoice in themselves.

The clue to a better circle of friends is a better self-qualification. We shall be admitted

to the rank to which we belong, being ourselves the card which entitles to admission. Merit holds the key to all the locks, and is sure of its welcome in the end, whatever passwords and masonries parties may affect at first, or however coldly they ask, "Who are you?" The saying is older than our era, and expresses the fine sense of the Hindoos, that "no stone is left out of the wall that is fitted for a place in it." We shall at length be known and taken for what we are, and our friends will be as our deserving. It is never caprice or custom which determines the final vote, but the fitness of things. Make a better character, and you will find better friends. Gabriel himself and his peers are waiting to greet you in their likeness, and will then yield their best hours to your presence.

The exceptions to this rule of like and like are only seeming; and the common saying, that "opposites attract," will not bear the test. There can be no friendships of unlikeness, because no key of understanding and no basis of unity; but there may be friendships of less and more of the same kind, and of that which is common to parties otherwise opposite. Old Thomas Hobart used to say of verses "written in sacke, yet not in sense, nobody can understand them

unless he be first drunke." The point of unity must be secured in all cases where a fair criticism is to be rendered. And how much more, where heart and heart are to enter into mutual understanding and sympathy!

Oil and water will not mix; but introduce an alkali which will pervade both, and you have a common quality whereby to draw on a union. Thus, Goethe and Schiller were, in the main, contrasts. The biographer of the former says: "One has the majesty of repose, the other of conflict. Goethe's frame is massive, imposing, — he seems much taller than he is: Schiller's frame is disproportioned, — he seems less than he is. Goethe holds himself stiffly erect: the long-necked Schiller 'walks like a camel.' Goethe's chest is like the torso of Theseus: Schiller's is bent, and has lost a lung . . . Goethe wrote in the freshness of morning, entirely free from stimulus: Schiller worked in the feverish hours of the night, stimulating his languid brain with coffee and champagne. One was the representative of realism, and the other of idealism. Goethe always strove to let Nature have free development, and produce the highest forms of Humanity; Schiller always pining for something greater than Nature, wishing to make men demigods." And yet

these great poets were great friends. For there was still a likeness hidden away at the centre of their unlikeness. They were both poets, and shared in common high religious instincts. They were alike dedicated to art. They were both inspired with a generous desire to please and elevate their kind by their labors. And our author adds: "The phases of their development had been very similar, and had brought them to a similar standing-point. They both began rebelliously; they both emerged from titanic lawlessness in emerging from youth to manhood." The secret of their lofty and charming fellowship is no secret. And there is ever a similar explanation where apparent social inaptitudes are found in company.

The perfect friendships of men and women, where custom and constraint have not interfered, would seem to show that differing degrees of the same kind are favorable when there is a mutual balance of superiorities; that is, where each finds in the other a complement of self. The dominant in each awakens and gladdens the latent in each. There takes place a crossing of sentiments; and the new selfhood thus set into active play is the precious miracle of this intercourse. The man is wrought into

her gentleness and grace, and is charmed, like one awaking from sleep to a June morning. The woman has her will and energy aroused by his greater forcefulness, and is delighted, like one who finds fresh treasure. It is the new birth and spring-time of dormant traits; the play of unused and well-rested powers; the sweet sense of versatility in our performance; the pride of a discovery to our credit, — that we are each of us two instead of one, two in one, as the tragedian likes to find that he is at home in comedy, and the droll would feel that he is equal to the *rôle* of Richard. Dr. Johnson enjoyed in himself a milder side when he visited, as he so often did, Mrs. Thrale; and she found, to her delight, that she was wiser and stronger in his company. So I regard all the famous or obscure friendships of men and women as the response of like to like, but ordinarily of less to more. It is a mutual sense of new life. It is another world than the one we mostly live in, but one to which we have native or constitutional passports. But friendship, in its perfect degree, will scarcely be tolerated, in an unchaste age, between the sexes; and, in all but the latest stages of life, its tendency must be to pass into the passional glow of love. Some one has

said, "There are no friends between sex and sex, but only acquaintances and lovers."

But while this high relation is that of kindred spirits, time supplies some elements to its perfection. But who, in these days of haste, has time to give to making friendships? We exact a price that our age is not ready to pay. "Sell us what you can for money, but offer us nothing which is to be bought with patience, stability, waiting in the same relations for results to ripen, holding our serenity and openness year after year toward the same parties. For we must whirl with the whirling world, and keep pace with the swift round of sensations." Well, as you will; but there can be no ideal companionship where Time is not permitted to set his seal and harden his wax. Age is needful to this as to wine. George the Third said he liked his old friends and old shoes best. Time is the universal finisher of all jobs well begun, — adds still higher and better degrees to our best work, rubs down the sharpness of its lines, overcomes the rawness of its tone. The artist says when he lays aside his brush, at the end of his task, "My picture will be more perfect in ten years than it is to-day." Age and use mellow the violin, and put the last degree of perfection

in its tone, as no manufacturer at Cremona or Apsam knows how to do. We are conformists, and constituted to reactions, — by slow degrees. How custom conquers and has its way with us! Never will we adopt this ugly style! but next year we are reconciled, and have it on, as if a new sense had been induced in the eye. Who can parry the spirit of the age? We all carry the local type; and, if you have good eyes, you shall see that this is a New-Englander, and that a Jerseyman, and the other a Buckeye. "Ah! sir, I see you are from Nova Scotia," we say, as one from that quarter hails us for direction or the time of the day. The ancients thought they explained Ulysses by saying that he was brought up in "craggy Ithaca." Who can elude this general influence? Who can escape the climate and the land? There is an invisible spirit abroad in nature and society, to which we give in conformity, at length, the very bones of our bodies, our complexions, and the fashion of our souls. How much more, then, shall friendship work upon us in its own interest to effect the likeness in which it lives and has its being! Every day will add to the degree of its cohesion; every year, every decade is another and longer chapter in this

sweet story of blending hearts. Tastes gradually conform. Virtues assume finer aspects when tried and proved; and even defects, if not too glaring, become at length enchanted, and what would we do but copy and share them? We have it from Plutarch that Plato's friends at length admired and imitated his stoop, Aristotle's his lisp, and Alexander's the inclination of his neck and rapidity of his speech. All the heart's heroes are beautiful to the eye and imitable. Friendship is a contagion; we invite its precious inoculations: it is a reciprocity, and insures an interchange of talents and tendencies, and a mutual adoption of tears and joys. Familiarity draws on sympathy and oneness between souls, as between us and the hills which come to be something more and better than hills; or between us and a house, — say the one we were born in, and lived in for those twenty wonderful years, which is now more than a house, even a shrine, or castle, that we would guard with bayonets if it were needful. Time ripens confidence, and we dare reckon on this heat between us as we dare trust the sun, and shall count on his coming and smiling tomorrow morning, because he has been steady and true so long. After five or ten years of con-

sistency and devotion, it is time to think we have found a friend; but we shall be still better assured in twenty years, in forty doubt will have ceased.

But why strive to tell the extent and variety of Time's contributions to friendship? Is not the whole universe ascending from age to age, as if in duration there were held in store the better and the best? Eternity has its arms full wherewith to reward our patience and perseverance.

A true friendship is its own end, and need look to no other. What would we but just to be together? That is first and chief. What we want mainly is our friend, not the chaff he brings us about matters and things, although that at his hand is something superior, like river water from the Jordan or Nile. We seek him for himself, and not his offices, which are the mere shadows of his presence. The moment we set ourselves in the relation of mutual conveniences, we are degraded, being no more friends, but self-seeking parasites. Amity is as essential to this compact as beauty to a picture; whilst service is incidental, and not at all to be reckoned on. This alliance is for its own sake. We make ourselves over to each other, as free

as genuine lovers of selfish calculations; and the overplus of mutual uses is that free gratuity which Heaven entails upon every exalted relation. First love, and then whatever comes after. First the feast of hearts, and then a little tea and toast for the stomach. First a sacred evening, and then such a bed as the house affords. My friend, I want thee, not thine! Thy highest eloquence is thy presence, and not thy speech! The heart is a royal gift; but the hands can only bring some cheap trumpery. "If a man should importune me," said Montaigne, "to give the reason why I loved him, I find it could no otherwise be expressed than by making answer, because it was he, because it was I."

We seek some things for our sake alone. The act is selfish, having in it no reciprocal or returning impulse. Much of our activity is legitimately void of generous prompting, since we deal with dead matter which can only serve us, and not we it. Here are oranges to be sucked, and thrown away; almanacs for this year's news of the moon and tides, and next year's waste-basket; garments for their warmth and gloss, and then for the ragman; and a thousand and one elements, — gold, silver, copper,

iron, earth, air, water, electricity, odor, &c., — which serve, but cannot be served. Our education is a little dangerous, like handling fire-arms. And it would seem that, with some, this self-referring habit has become a mastery and carries the whole nature along with it, — for they make friends in the same way. Their smiles are selfish fascinations and cruel lures; their civilities are tentacles; their sweet words are some mere notes of the sirens, and like Ulysses' sailors we need wax in our ears; their friendship is a velvet paw: that is, they want not you, but yours. It is a stroke of policy based on calculation, like the solution of a problem in algebra, — with politicians, their ruling passion, so that you know they will address the Saurians as "my friends and honored fellow-citizens;" with many merchants, a sly approach to your pocket, or in the interest of large and paying sales; with the vain, a buying of more praise with less; and with a somebody who crosses every one's path, a worming into one's good graces to command secrets, influences, gifts, feathers to soften a nest, and access to desired ends and elevations. The rich and powerful are especially exposed; and an ancient king seems to have been justly wise, who had

all his friends drunk once a year and thus transparent: —

> "Now do I play the touch,
> To try if thou be current gold indeed."

There are natures, we must believe, so quick and true that the least sham of friendliness, or a looking beyond itself, is instantly detected and barred out. They scent the enemy; and this is especially true of women except where love impairs their moral sensibility. But most of us are accessible through our greedy appetite for regards, and fall easy victims to this craft. Timon's friends were all leeches, but with his self-biassed eye, watching eagerly for laudatory signs, he saw it not so: they covered him with smiles, but with an eye to his head butler; their fine protestations meant only more of his dinners and festivals, or more of his checks, to satisfy their imperious creditors and buy off the sheriffs, or to carry their last financial ventures to successful ends. We have all had our foot in this inviting trap, and know the friendship that is an artifice, and not its own sufficient end. Judas betrayed us with a kiss. For a puff we suffered ourselves to be taken in and done for. The artful refer to our "well-known charity," and we pass them our pocket-book. But let us

set it down as the last limit of baseness to have our friends as pawns to play our game with. Let us take our shoes off, and come to them with uncovered heads and the most perfect degree of sincerity, as we approach our altars of prayer.

The true end is our friend; and we shall only think how we can serve him, and not how he can serve us. Friendship is no pound-for-pound policy; or, as Cicero has well said in his masterly essay, "It scorns to poise the balance so exactly equal that nothing shall be placed in the one scale without its equivalent in the other." It may ask a favor, but only with a spirit that would return a greater, so that its asking is in spirit a conferring; whilst its main impulse is to bestow with an utter disregard of return, as the flower blooms and the sun shines, and all nature is free expenditure. The eye looks from this mount only one way. The law of this height is overflow, as Byron said, in some of his moods, "I must write or burst."

The world has no better text to this point than the old story of Damon and Pythias, which, to preserve its best flavor, I quote as it stands in the "Percy Anecdotes." "Damon being condemned to death by Dionysius, Tyrant of

Syracuse, obtained liberty to visit his wife and children, leaving his friend Pythias as a pledge for his return, on condition that if he failed Pythias should suffer in his stead. At the appointed time, Damon failed in appearing, and the tyrant had the curiosity to visit Pythias in prison. 'What a fool you was,' said he, 'to rely on Damon's promise! How could you imagine that he would sacrifice his life for you or for any man?' 'My lord,' said Pythias, with a firm voice and noble aspect, 'I would suffer a thousand deaths, rather than my friend should fail in any article of honor. He cannot fail. I am confident of his virtue, as I am of my own existence. But I beseech the gods to preserve his life. Oppose him, ye winds! Disappoint his eagerness, and suffer him not to arrive till my death has saved a life of much greater consequence than mine, — necessary to his lovely wife, to his little innocents, to his friends, to his country. Oh! let me not die the cruellest of deaths in that of my Damon.' Dionysius was confounded, and awed with the magnanimity of these sentiments. He wished to speak: he hesitated; he looked down, and retired in silence. The fatal day arrived. Pythias was brought forth, and with an air of satisfaction

walked to the place of execution. He ascended the scaffold, and addressed the people. 'My prayers are heard: the gods are propitious; the winds have been contrary. Damon could not conquer impossibilities: he will be here to-morrow, and my blood shall ransom that of my friend.' As he pronounced these words a buzz arose; a distant voice was heard; the crowd caught the words, and 'Stop, stop, executioner!' was repeated by every person. A man came at full speed. In the same instant he was off his horse, on the scaffold, and in the arms of Pythias. 'You are safe!' he cried; 'you are safe, my friend! The gods be praised, you are safe!' Pale and half speechless, in the arms of his Damon, Pythias replied in broken accents: 'Fatal haste, cruel impatience. What envious powers have wrought impossibilities against your friend! but I will not be wholly disappointed. Since I cannot die to save you, I will die to accompany you.' Dionysius heard and beheld with astonishment. His eyes were opened; his heart was touched; and he could no longer resist the power of virtue. He descended from his throne, and ascended the scaffold. 'Live, live, ye incomparable pair! Ye have demonstrated the existence of virtue, and consequently of a God who rewards it. Live

happy, live revered; and as you have invited me by your example, form me by your precepts to participate worthily of a friendship so divine.'"

Who can tell the value of a friend? Diderot said of the Abbé Galiani, "He is a treasure in rainy days; and if the cabinet-makers made such things, everybody would have one in the house." "Mr. Walpole is to me spirits of harts-horn," said Lady Townsend. "It is your destiny to inspire, mine to be inspired," said Ballanche to Madame Récamier. "Your voice is music to my soul," said Alexander the Emperor of Russia to Madame de Krüdener. "I protest against your long silences," wrote Madame Swetchine to her priestly friend Lacordaire. These are notes from the chorus. But what wonder is too great for the presence of a true friend to accomplish? The doctor has no such medicine for the head-ache. Punch is a quack in comparison, for the treatment of the blues. A north-west wind is not so good to clear the fog from the mind, and set all things in a bright light. It was a doctrine of the Cabalists that an "angel who spends seven days on earth becomes opaque:" it is a doctrine with all the world, that he who comes to a wise and virtuous friend is speedily aflame with light.

When goodness attracts us, policemen and prisons may be spared, and sermons and prayers will have chiefly a devotional value. But akin to virtue, as a lure to the right paths, is the regard we have for a worthy friend. We are debtors to our elect. We live to the eye and heart of our friends, — who knows how much? We miss their moral bracing among strangers; and must it be confessed that only one man in ten can safely visit Paris or New York alone? Affection breeds a finer sense of justice; and only the lover of the whole race is equal to courtesy everywhere, and would be as true to Sandwich Islanders as to his next-door neighbors. But love is also a spur to ambition. He who has a circle of true friends, who make his triumphs their joy, whose pulses quicken when he plucks victory from high places, has something more to live for than the vagabond or hermit, who is severed from the interest of his kind. All flowers bloom and blush, say the Orientals, to glorify the sun.

The generosity of friendship where the worldly conditions are unequal needs to be managed with great delicacy and discretion, and often checked; since it may subject our *other self* to undue stress or humiliation. We

must impose no heavy burdens on our friends, and need to see that generosity, in some cases, is rather in withholding than conferring, as sparing a bitter sense of dependence and undischarged obligation. When benefactions are unequal between friends, as from rich to poor, it requires rare management to sustain the delicate and perfect balance of relations. The case is hopeless unless the emphasis be steadily held on the *social* qualities, — the fellowship of hearts and the equal worth of souls. The money-test must be wholly set aside and forgotten, or the rich must bring his riches as if they were no more his than his friend's. It is a good fortune when all the conditions are level, and gifts, save those which are for tokens and not values, are out of order; or when a superiority on one side is balanced by some superiority on the other; for, in lieu of this, only the rarest felicity will serve to shield friendship from damage.

And now we have our hand in, let us have another caution. Friendship may be selfish, not as between friend and friend, but between its circle of two or ten and those outside. It often subverts broader relations, and destroys a comprehensive justice and courtesy. According to Aristotle, "Those friendships which are

most celebrated are between two only;" but these two must not be too exclusive at the party and before the public. Our darlings must part from each other's arms when they enter company. They must take stock in humanity, and hide their intense duality as somewhat that is invidious in the social circle, since it is a virtual and uncomplimentary declaration that beyond two letters the rest of the alphabet is quite uninteresting, and to be set aside. And is it not, moreover, a breach of honor to accept an invitation to the party, and not join the party and further its ideal unity and spirit? Should not Maggie and Mamie, who have not come out of their mutual relations for the evening, apologize to the company before leaving it? I regard the closest friendship a private interest, which we shall spare before the world to a large extent, and adopt other obligations. This golden band must be unbuckled much of the time, or gracefully concealed, and we must be true to other ties. We must not buy friendship by selling courtesy, but remain still unselfish, and recognize cordially and generously even the race itself; and our private affection, if truly worthy, will generate these expansions, as the mother in rightly loving her own child learns

to love all children. If you would feel that you live among worthy men and women, make a study of the best specimens of the race. It is a happy discipline of the eye, giving it a quicker sense to detect the same traits in common life thereafter. There is no monopoly of the virtues, as there are no equivalents for them. All the coal is not found at Newcastle; and if there is one hero and saint, there are many. And so our best friend should interpret and exalt humanity to us, and be a point of divergence for our love and polite considerations.

In sailing on this famous stream — the Rhine of the heart — there is a Scylla and Charybdis to be shunned. A dainty attention disgusts the sensible, who are not pets to be stroked and caressed. It is to their credit to take them on trust, and treat their sentiment as strong and secure. But no more is a friend, because willing and forbearing, to be crushed into corners and put to low uses, and presumed upon and insulted at will. Let us surround him with due respects and courtesies, like those which guard the queen on her throne.

III.

DAILY SUNSHINE.

"We must run glittering, like a brook,
In the sunshine, or we are unblest."

WORDSWORTH.

"What's i' the air? —
Some subtle spirit runs through all my veins.
Hope seems to ride this morning on the wind,
And joy outshines the sun."

PROCTOR'S MIRANDOLA.

CHEERFULNESS differs from rapture as humor from wit. It is a lower tone of that scale whose highest note is ecstasy. It is an every-day measure of gladness, and should be an affair of the kitchen, shop, and street, — the angel ever at our side, the sunshine always abroad; whilst it takes the whole breadth of the morning, or evening, or mountain, favorably seen, and not a mere keyhole view, to draw on emotional overflows and outbursts of joy. One notices that even Niagara must have time and

good subjects to gain a high victory; nor can a great painting be caught on the run, as a boy takes his lunch, but yields its best effect only loftily and leisurely. There is no sublimity of ideas that can inundate and enchant us with bliss at every corner. And what serves to-day may fail to-morrow, as if Nature were an economist of her power to thrill us, as parents hold rare privileges in some reserve from their children; or she understands that the best would cease to be best if made common, as too much sweet sickens, and excess of pastime palls.

We are strung to a lower key; and the more we find our real nature, through culture and growth, the more we find this is so. Beauty, for example, is simple, to the extent of being indefinable; and the best taste in art will have neutral tints and low tones. The pictures and statues which are done to the approval and delight of the ages, and will always be in advance of the times, are modest and plain. The truest and best livers avoid expense and topheaviness, and emphasize the ordinary and real. An advance of years is ever away from special feats, — holidays, shows, fireworks, and gingerbread, and all wild climaxes of emotion, which are so

precious to the raw and unripe youth, — toward good averages and fine every-day moods. And what is civilization but a reduction of noisy and tempestuous aboriginal impulses, and a better observance of law and order, — an exchange of jungles for clearings, of allegories and mythologies for a little more common sense, and of a wild chaos of passions for the perfect peace of high principles? And do not these abatements, coming with the progress of man, seem to indicate that cheerfulness is a better staple grade of sensibility than ecstasy or rapture, — that the lower is really the higher tone, and the very soul of the celestial music?

It is something gained to have learned that a handful of modest violets, or a cluster of the trailing-arbutus for a button-hole, are better than a gaudy sunflower or pompous peony; that the annuals outrank the century-plant; that a plenty of tallow candles is superior to Bengal lights; that a little sparkling water to our daily thirst, and plenty of beaded dew on the grass, and films of roseate mist floating in the sunset sky, and lakelets here and there in the landscapes, to the eye, are more than Niagara, which is not much to those who live by it, and would scarcely serve us any better. It is at least a practical

point gained to have our ideal joys set thus within easier reach; for how often have we led a barren chase after rapture, when we might easily enough have overtaken the finer and gentler degrees of cheerfulness, — as children watch, with chilled blood, for northern lights and comets, which come or stay as they list, and at best but rudely impress our senses, and are blind to the serene glow and spiritual sparkle of the stars, which they may enjoy who will, and night by night.

Greatness condescends, and hides in lowly guises and scenes. Real kings like to flee from their thrones, and steal away into cottages and corners and forests, and have a rural delight and peace. It is a mark of low breeding to count only on the remote and rare, and hold ourselves in waiting for the chariots and steeds of the sun; as it was said by quaint Thomas Fuller that "it is no pastime with country clowns that tumbles and tosses not the whole body; they think themselves not warm till they are all on fire, and count it but dry sport till they swim in their own sweat." But angels go quiet, and are open to a legion of gentle pleasures and silent voices and secret charms. One's best idea of heaven is not of an Indian pow-wow or

old-fashioned camp-meeting, but of somewhat more private and free from uproar.

Cheerfulness is more or less affected by matters quite out of our reach, such as temperament, the state of the nerves, climate, aspects of Nature, the falling out of circumstances; and so far we can have nothing to say, since rhetoric or incantations will come too late to serve. These things will not be made to our order. If we are born Celts or Saxons, or of these parents and not of those, to that extent there is nothing to be said. Blood has got the start, and decides; and a perfect chemical analysis should be able to announce of one red drop, "This has frolic in it, and is on the dance;" and of another, "This reveals a coolness and a shade, as if generated in dark groves." The original length of our faces is a piece of fate, and is to be taken for what it is, and made the best of by later care and painstaking, — as an artist would take a statue or picture at any given point, and spend his skill on the needed modifications. We are not our own makers, but may be our own menders.

There is no denying it, — the stars dance over some cradles as they do not over others, and occult causes tell on our destiny.

"All pleasant things Atrides doth adorn;
The merry genius smiled when he was born.'

Plutarch said that "Crates, with only his scrip and tattered cloak, laughed out his life jocosely, as if he had been always at a festival." There are plenty of Merry-Andrews, with their mouths stretched from ear to ear, and their eyes full to the brim of ludicrous lights, always coming to the surface by birth and secret favor. We know not what happy bargain has been made in their behalf, but we know full well they constitute a laughing brotherhood, independent of any earthly rite of initiation that can be taken note of. Shall we say they have descended from some pre-existent merry club? or that some angel has volunteered to attend and tickle their noses?

But let us, who are not so divinely born, take a little Christian comfort in noting how these jocular zanies hold their risible gifts ever at the peril of falling out of order with them. They carry the dance beyond daylight, drag the festival to the funeral, and have the mirror of propriety broken in all directions; for which they have to pay heavy — the heedless rogues! — in the black coin of mortifications, apologies, heart-burnings, and more chances to stay away

from refined circles. "No one," said Richter, "is more profoundly sad than he who laughs too much." Or, we should say, when frolic betrays poverty of fine feeling, and is a selfish zest, it is good fortune to escape it, and share a wiser and safer soberness. Drummond said severely of Ben Jonson, but we hope not truly, "He was given rather to lose a friend than a jest." But not without deserving has laughter a bad name for being a little wayward and reckless on occasions. The buffoon is never a man of heart, since he aims to cover you or your act with ridicule, and drinks his wine of delight at your expense.

On the other hand, we are not to look for exemption from the effects of climate, weather, the face of Nature, or the play of fortune. We are constituted to reactions; are made to feel acutely our relations; are harps in the hands of the whole choir of harpers, who are on the ground before us, or in spite of us, and who will draw their own music in major or minor keys. We are not stoics, and cannot be. There is no such thing as indifference, save in the mere name. I gladly own to the happy sway of fair weather, with a wind west by north-west; and I have to confess I have no philoso-

phy or religion which enables me to enchant the clouds and chilly air that sweep out of the east, and make them as if they were not. I can, to a degree, sweeten every bitter, and will do my best; but still that element is in the cup, and will appear to the taste. A dreary waste is not a park, and refuses to affect us so. Norway will not look like Italy to any pair of eyes that still have sanity in them; nor can Norwegians be sunny and singing and laughing, like their brothers and sisters of the balmy South. We must not look for the most cheerful music and a fully happy art and literature, out of the temperate belt that girdles the earth. You must be an Oriental, bathed in opium atmospheres, and moved by Arabian or Hindoo skies, to reach that dreamy imagination which is the delight and glory of the East. The complexions of the world crop out on our faces, and who can help it? All the cosmetics we know of come too late. What is history but a record of the sway of scenes and events over the feelings? and we should not expect the old Hebrews could draw from their harps or voices the same happy notes in captivity as in Canaan, nor that exiles should be as merry as citizens. The farmer's heart must take somewhat of its tone

from the seasons. Grief has an iron point, and leaves its mark in spite of faith and sympathy and the best sermons.

But looking at these features of Nature and fortune, which cast forth shadows upon the spirit, as clouds darken the landscape, let us be slow to accuse Providence. The universe is created in the interest of cheerfulness; and the slight qualifications, to a sufficiently broad view, are indifferent, like a moment less or more on or off eternity. Let us confide that the world is well made and well managed; that it is a music-box, with no more minor notes than a perfect art requires. Nature is all benefits and blessings. All her dragons, look they never so rough, are to be mounted and ridden to a purpose. She is a faithful friend, because at once infinitely wise and infinitely good. She does her part to fill all the plates. Start your inventory of fine colors and forms, and where will you end? What variety and profusion of flavors and relishes for this little tasting patch of the mouth! And we well-nigh ask, in the moment of rapt thought, if God has neglected all else to attend to these things! But no. The delights mount with the rank of desires and the power to appropriate the better and the best.

There are finer furnishings for the finer nature, to the last limit of ascension. We rise but to reach greater riches and more precious relations; and attainment still fosters hope. Everything is for the best, that is a native belonging to the universe: —

> "Our times are in God's hands, and all our days
> Are as our needs; for shadow as for sun,
> For cold as heat, for want as wealth, alike
> Our thanks are due, since that is best which is."

To insure cheerfulness, let us join Nature, and journey in her company, as we would join a wise and good friend who knows the best road, and is going our way, and will gladden the hours for us with genial communions. Joy will be found in sharing the spirit and method of the world, and not playing at cross-purposes; in accepting and obeying the high dictations from head-quarters, and pushing aside our little caprices and whims. He is happy who happily obeys. For example, that workman has a sure source of cheer who takes his hint from gravitation, and works with and by it, in daily wonder at its generous assistance, and not against it. The farmer sings, as he well may, who times and chimes with the seasons and soils, planting in the spring, and the seed that will grow; but

how if he disregard these submissions, and sets his May forward into mid-summer, and plants cotton where he should corn? It will be to our pleasure and content if we keep our hearths cool in summer and kindle our fires on them in winter; if we ask the weather what we shall wear; consult our foot for the size of our boot; accept the invitation of our stomach to dinner; and respect the night-hours for sleep. Nature has settled it in her wise councils, ages back, how it shall be in these matters, and in all others, if a perfect cheerfulness is to be looked for; and nine-tenths of our miseries are the fruits of being out of joint and disobedient. We wander from her road, and lose or refuse her step and swing. We are not like the good rider, who rises and falls gracefully with his horse; nor the good seaman, who rolls with his rolling ship; nor the good dancer, who minds the tune and feels constant happy relations to tone and time. On the contrary, we take the world, whose oscillations and timings are yet perfect, as with a heedless or conceited or criminal perversity, and find our situations painful and cheerless.

From the grain of dust to the soul, and the seraph, and the Supreme, there reaches the king-

dom and sway of law; and a foregone decision, perfect as geometry, or as Infinite Love, how affairs shall proceed to the end of peace and gladness. The right tracks are laid. The grooves were anciently cut. The lights are turned on. The engines are happy hits, with all the gearing made to order. And the command has gone forth, and goes forth evermore, to enter here and advance and be glad. And will we go *that* way? It is through a boundless paradise, and we shall sing pæan out of full hearts. Or will we go *another?* It will be through an Infernum, and our music shall be a long and bitter wail. There is daily sunshine for them who are wise to the conditions, and wear furs in the arctic regions and white pants or dresses in Florida. They will be happy who regard their purses and preferences, and their fitness generally, and not the habits of their neighbors, nor the advertisements of the newspapers, whether to visit, in vacation time, Italy, Saratoga, or Kennebunk, or stay at home. They are the happy men who are self-respecting and stand to their manliness, and sing bass, and fell forests, and take ships to sea, and fight battles when the enemy invades, and refuse to be tied up in aprons and mind nurseries; and they the happy women who are womanly,

and, as they are made to do, gracefully double our civilization by supplying the feminine to balance the masculine, making the beauty equal the power, and keeping all the functions of good society, as Nature appoints, in full and fine play. Happy are they who honor their hearts, and the best habits of the world, and marry for love and the perfect home, and not for speculation in stocks, or the setting up of a temporary Turkish harem on free-love grounds. Happy are they whose religion is true to the soul, and a high and sacred freedom, and not a cramping tradition or fashion, and a misfit, like a Chinese shoe or an American waist.

No one crosses Nature with impunity, or but to get a longer face for so doing. She delights in our company, and will punish us if we desert her. We join her but to overtake blessings and smiles, to which all her paths lead. The key to all joys is, not to contest her points, but to adopt them. Joy is for him who is in advance of fate on the same road, who obeys that he may command, and gets the better of necessity with liberty of the same kind?

The joyful success is to find our vein, and work in it. Our gifts are foreordinations which foreordain, and will bring us liberty and delight

through their wise use. They will sing at their right tasks, which may be this or that or the other, — music, oratory, mending shoes, taming lions, practising black arts and legerdemain, making doors and sashes, or managing banks. By allowing our powers to foreshow our way, as the firefly lights its own path, or as the planet by its weight and speed determines its own orbit, we shall be sure of a cheerful on-going. Our careers will be agreeable to our being when they are births and outgrowths from it. The society that is free from mannerism is always agreeable to itself, whether rough or refined, as Nature loves her own atmosphere best. All is well and a source of delight, so long as the rustic keeps to his rusticity, and Jonathan does not allow a new suit of clothes to set him into false relations; and Molly, the farmer's daughter, does not adopt some academy *patois* instead of her native tongue; and all of us are true to what we are, and escape the cramps and frictions of assumed parts. All is charming and cheerful, so long as birds fly and fishes swim, and souls respect their spheres.

If what is one man's meat is another man's poison, then they have a good fortune who find and feed from their native dish, to which their taste and stomach are fitted. Izaak Walton,

who had a piscatorial temperament, — which is about half-and-half laziness and love of nature, — was in bliss all the forenoon, at the end of a fish-pole, with a single nibble and no haul; but a friend of his raved and broke his rod in disgust at the end of fifteen impatient minutes: which signifies that for cheer one should go fishing, and another should not. Some huntsmen, sharing all the fondness of their craft for this laborious but high sport, got Lord Burleigh to go on the chase. They decoyed him with high visions of sport, to which they honestly looked. But at the close of the day he said, "Take me again in such a fault, and I 'll give you leave to punish me." But to the gamesters it was a jolly run, and gave them stomach for their meat as well as meat for their stomach.

All is well when our life is free and real and level to its nature. And he has good fortune who has so strong a bent for some craft or calling, so powerful a determination in his brain or hand, that he shall be surely brought to pursue the end to which he was elected before he was born. To him the days will be angels. If we are on the best of terms with our tasks, we shall greet them every morning as we would our friends.

In like manner our habits, which are securely fixed, and not in conflict with our better judgment, carry perpetual charms; and it will be much wiser to keep the lifelong harness on than to cast it off, since relief is so often not relief, and our fine retreat is likely to be populous with miseries. There is a lesson for us in the famous anecdotes: that the retired barber, in his rich chateau, had to give a few free shaves daily for solace; and the wealthy butcher, who had gone out of the business, was forced to compromise and kill one lamb or two a week that he might sleep well and endure the day.

As we are in possession of a company of gifts, so must we realize a symphony of experiences and uses. Your unhappy genius, like Rousseau, Swift, Byron, Poe, or any of the moody legion, who dare not look at their razors, is paying the penalty of a too exclusive action, the blowing of a single pipe of the organ, which leaves many of his powers to disuse and unrest. The worldling is miserable, after the first heat of money-getting, in his neglect of his better being, which gold cannot buy off, nor estates bring into willing captivity: a higher nature sits enthroned, like a divinity, in the midst of his faculties, and disdains any such degrading bar-

gain or treaty; and this man must consent to be a whole man, or there shall be no full, sweet music of life for him. The monk loses his visions and peace and cheer, by forsaking his just relations; and Benedict must come back from his rat-hole and sly corner, and live in all the open and broad ways of this world of God. There must be no thrumming on one string, but a drawing of harmonious strains from the whole harp. If we would see a thoroughly happy man, we must look for him among those of even development and diverse activity and experience; for the one-idea and one-achievement man pays for his best success with a certain bitterness.

The sunny and joyous spirit of progress or furtherance merits an extended notice, since it involves so many delightful qualities, — such as a perpetual sense of newness, like having it always morning; and of usefulness and honor; and of glad companionship with the high genius of the universe, which is that of evolution and advance. The curse of being is culmination or solstice, or a stay in its processes and procedure. If we have overtaken our end, we shall wither like ripe leaves, or rot like ripe apples, by the law of our being; and good cheer

will be no part of our lot. He who would be no more than he is, and has ceased to feel the better attractions, and has fallen out of the flowing current, is nobody; and to be counted out as alike void of use and gladness. We must live to some purpose. We must live a growing life, and have a report of progress whenever we read our daily journals, and be all the time cutting new notches to indicate advance. "I am suffocated and lost," said Margaret Fuller, "when I have not the bright feeling of progression." Or, rather, life reproaches itself when at a stand-still.

The charm and cheer of art are in its motion and furtherance. If it is not liquid and fluent, there is a sobered aspect, from which we instantly turn our eyes. No end must be suffered; for that is fatal and gives a Chinese daub, full of sleep and death. Statues must be on the run, and pictures in the act of becoming what they are not, or they cannot hold us a moment, but repel us as with a look of decay or smell of mould. "Let us wait," said one, caught by this perfect and essential illusion, as he stood gazing at Rubens's great painting of the "Descent from the Cross," and was lost in the spirit of the scene, — "let us wait till they get him down."

Let us wait, we might say, for this painted haze is about to reveal illimitable mountain grandeurs; this portrait will tell vast depths of secrets; these angels are but the heralds of coming troops, just out of sight; these clouds are sailing off, — don't you see them go? — and we shall have blue sky soon; and this painted cow and milkmaid we shall look for to-morrow, and expect to find one in the pasture among the grass and ferns, and the other among the pans in the dairy-room. Art is thus a becoming, is on the way, flows with nature, and is wreathed with the perpetual smile of newness; or it is not art. Every true portrait must flatter, since we are none of us, to the painter, equal to what we are to ourselves; besides it must show betterment, which is also true to us, or should be. The sculptured heads of some of the Roman Cæsars, at the Boston Athenæum, are of the very men we have been waiting for and not yet able to find. They are not historical and of dead men, but are full of advancement and happy anticipation, — arrivals from coming heroic generations. And so the Greek Apollo and Venus are still ideal forms, and of the future, — awaken hope, but stir not memory. Indeed, were they not finished last night and set up this morning? or

will not some great artist, centuries hence, awake out of a rare dream, and, finding chisel in hand and fresh dust on his apron, claim, in all honesty, that he wrought them? It is thus all progress and life in art; and hence its joyful spirit and influence, for neither itself nor its disciples will ever grow old and sober.

And so in Nature: the feeling soul soon discovers that the seasons of greatest gladness are those of greatest growth; and that all lull is loss of joy. The happy hours of the day are when this queen is coming and going. It is the advancing spring which sounds the merriest notes of the year, and all is less tuneful in September: the birds have dropped their songs with their tasks; the lingering brooks give no music; and the ripened and spent year is less vocal with gladness. How Nature strives, by gravitation and winds, to have her waters and clouds in motion, and bent on errands of grace and use, lest they sadden! It is everywhere a conquest of circumferences, new circles encircling the old, the flowing of ends into beginnings; and no finality or fixed limit whatever, — as if that were a misery to be shunned. The boy thinks there is but one horizon, which he sees just over yonder; but the man finds there are

thousands, and believes that beyond the last is another. The universe is all graduation and mounting. First and lowest is melted lava, then sandstone, granite, drift, water, air, and electricity, and — who knows what? There is no end to the ascension, no last round in the ladder; and the German philosophers have the right of it in spirit, when they define the universe as "an eternal becoming." Indeed, so choice is Nature of development, so ascending are her habits, that we half tremble to follow back the links of the coil, lest we fall on strange ancestors, whose acquaintance we would rather not make.

And this high game of Art and Nature, always striking out for new and better winnings, we also must play at, in our human sphere, if we would find and dwell in a like cheerful atmosphere. We must avoid stagnation and halting in our way, or suffer a secret sense of self-reproach and a weariness of spent conditions. Augustus was happy that he was able to say, "I found Rome a city of brick, and left it a city of marble." And we are all made glad by something to show for ourselves, having a fine property in what we have done. A successful day's work is a better pillow for the tired

man than feathers. The cat brings her mouse for exhibition, and the dog is proud of the day's store of game, as others than Landseer can detect. Victory is magical, and inspires half the world with ambition, and the other half with pleasant recollections. But that we cannot happily repose on *old* things of this kind, shows the necessity of progress, and the right use of every moment, to our joy. The success that was of yesterday is not quite the thing for to-day, but, on the whole, shames us if we hold such powers idle. I know of no more miserable object than the man who did something ten or twenty years ago, but has done nothing since except to tell of *that.* Memory becomes his perpetual accuser so, saying to him, "Thou art less and less a man." The birds, one fancies, hold little or no stock in their last year's nests; and old deeds can never take the place of new in this career of immortals. "He may laugh that wins," says the old proverb; but not he that has got done winning, and folded his powers in unworthy torpor. He who has outgrown himself, and has a sense of it, is so far sobered and mortified; and he who is not merely resting, but rusting after toil, is put to shame as a cumberer of the ground.

The truly gladdening monument, wherewith to have our years and lives crowned, is an advancing one, that admits of no capstone or completion. If our house, which we have built for ourselves, is of so good material and so well built that we may see it stretching its protecting roof over coming generations, a home still, it will be more of a house and reflect on us a higher joy. To have established a business that shall remain a necessity and honor to commerce, like many English and some American enterprises, and in which, as it were, the life of its founder enters into endless service and furtherance of civilization, is the highest and happiest business success. To project a charity into the ages, giving our arms and alms an endless extension; to send forth a good family of children into the world, who in their turn shall send forth others, and so perpetuate our benediction; to plant a few shade-trees for the newcomers; to sing a song so true to the ages that one may catch, as did Wordsworth, the returning echoes; to leave wise and good influences behind us; to die and not die, but just then begin to live and serve in the earth, — this it is which gives the most cheering look and richest flavor to our days and nights, and shall make

death easy. The least advance in whatever worthy way is a pride and a delight. A new fact and another principle are so much more of heaven. The sense of having got the victory over time and decay, of riding for ever on a flowing wave, of having made a beginning which shall know no ending, and at the same time of self-progress, — such is and must be ever an unsparable gladness.

Made as we are, we shall always be in debt to the beauty and neatness of our surroundings, as a means of cheer; for beauty itself is cheerful, sharing a play of finer lights, and the musical soul of Apollo; and sets us, by sure communications, into its own state. All nature is pictorial, and made to beguile us. There is no sparing of paint on our House, save of the colors that are leaden and uninteresting. The enchantments are laid on so thick that none can tell where they are not. What an endless attention to canopies, curves, horizons, waves, bending of grasses, swaying of trees, rolling of landscapes, and rounding of forms! What an effort to hide the rags from our eyes! for if Nature has a rent in her fair garment, she sets her wits at work instantly to cover the ugliness, and have all pleasing again. She would be presentable and

charming to us, as maidens to their lovers. She would have grass in our streets if she could; and adorns the rough rocks with lichens, and old ruins and palings with mosses and vines. In my boyhood there came a land-slide on my father's farm: to-day I am struck with wonder to find a park of young trees on this spot, and have no doubt the beauty-fostering spirit has sent a bevy of speckled partridges and graceful squirrels to crown the scene. And all this means for us more of cheer; for who can enter into this genial presence, which hovers and gleams everywhere, and not feel some sympathetic and joyous dancing of the blood and relaxing of the rigid muscles of the face? One may be glad to the "brink of fear," as he bathes in this flowing sea of beauty.

And do we not owe a duty to ourselves and our friends, that we so adorn our own little corners, the mimic worlds of our creation and care, with the grace that charms and makes cheerful? Should not we also enter into this high aim, and help charge this fine battery, whereof the heart is a willing subject? Never let us suffer blank walls, however white, so long as pictorial paper can be had so cheap. Let us gladden the eye, if we are able, with meritori-

ous fresco, but at all events with pictures, which even the poorest can command. Let us refuse to be shut into a cheerless seven-by-nine room. My little study is five paces one way and four the other, and sufficiently low to suggest humility to a tall man. But this is a low and base measurement, that may be easily set aside. In effect my study has an area of miles, and most delightful ones; and many a Boston and New York parlor, with naked walls, is a dreary coop in comparison. With a few pictures I have contrived to set this little box out of doors, and under the sky, and in the sunshine, and can at will overcome all sense of narrowness, and range with a happy freedom. Here, on the north, is a herd of cattle, a wooded glen, and a bold-towering Swiss mountain beyond, having its crown bathed with the golden glow of the setting sun; on the south is a broad, quiet valley, with its winding river and fields of ripe grain; on the east a farm-yard; and on the west an arm of a lake stretching away through forests toward the main body of water, which is hidden, and a mountain beyond, which is visible and bathed with a soothing air of repose. And every room may have such genial expansions, and cheering invasions from wide distances. It

requires no large outlay to work this pleasing miracle; for the imagination is such a befriending talent, such a gift of magic and illusions, so ready to carry forward and complete any ideal that is once hinted, that very ordinary prints — even not a few from our pictorial papers, "Harper's" and the "Graphic," which a few pennies will command and four pins will frame — are quite equal to the desired end. I recall a poor woman's room thus adorned, and have sat in it to observe her cheer and feel my own. The moral credit of the show may have added to its effect, — it was such an honor to do her best thus; and yet no one can doubt the happy influence, in many of the humblest homes, of inexpensive beauty.

May it not be that the real secret lies in having the sense of the beautiful alive and active; and it shall not matter so much about the extent and rank of the objects that serve? The moment the taste for beauty is awakened, all becomes instantly transfigured, and life is new, — a somewhat that is sweet and musical. The whole house has another look and atmosphere, that has a patch of flowers in front, or a single fine treasure within, as if a delicious drop were an adequate flux to dissolve the world into a flow

of joy. "The heaviest weights," said the ancients, "are often suspended on the finest wires;" and it would seem that the least conscious co-operation with the finer aims of Providence brings a new universe of good cheer to our possession, — draws the man out of his brute relations, allies him to the stars and angels, and sets him against omnipresent influences of gladness. The smallest flower, or any mere glint of beauty, is great with happy influence for the sensitive; whilst a meadow or mountain is nothing to the dormant.

And neatness! Who is poet enough to chant the full praise of a clean face on all things, as a friend of pleasure and contentment? Whilst its effect is highly moral, like a chapter of Antoninus, and æsthetical as a view of the sky, it also cheers every sense of the body and sets it more fully at peace. The untidy can never be eminently virtuous or happy, as having a defect that vitiates universally. We shall never look into stys for saints and angels; nor into filthy homes, greasy and dirt-besmeared, for any but a peevish and low-spirited family, whose finer life and love seem to have withdrawn and shrivelled in sheer self-protection.

The suggestion that our imagination is given

us in the interest of good cheer is one to be taken to heart and applied. We may enchant the unenchanted with this benignant and fertile power. It surpasses Thor; for it can not only drink the ocean dry, as he could not, but can plant gardens and cities on its steepest plateaux. It can have as many rainbows as it likes, and set them where it lists, for picturesque effect. It can overlay all things with the prismatic colors, having them mixed to its taste, or changeful as on the dove's neck or the best silks from Canton. In childhood, its free magic waives realities with a sovereign unconcern, since it can at pleasure turn a crutch into a fine steed; two chairs into a chariot; pebbles or pine-cones into a herd of cattle and sheep; a boy and girl into a school of a hundred, with a full corps of teachers and board of examiners; and a device of cloth into the finest baby to be found, which goes to sleep and wakes to order, talks and visits like a Madame de Staël, and attends to etiquette with all the precision of a Chesterfield. And, later, what angels without wings it makes of lovers! Jake and Hepsy, for the time, are skyborn, and belong to some better planet: when were such an Adonis and Venus ever seen before! Who of us has not wrought the clouds to solid bastions, or a sub-

lime mountain-land? Who does not people the solitude and the sunset with beautiful spirits, — as Swedenborg always went well attended, and the unpoetic Jews conceived pretty poetic guardians watching over their steps?

Imagination yields ready romance. It is master of the game of illusions, and can defy ill fortune. It superadds to all things as it lists, gives wings to the wingless, and life to the dead, — as an artist I once went with on a sketching excursion was for mending or recasting into better forms every scene he took; setting here a clump of trees, where there was none; there a pleasing ruin, which might have been, but was not; yonder, on the lawn, an artistic group of cows and hens and pigs, that only forgot to come there just then; and adding, for happy variety, a little lake, a boat, an old stub, and a fish-hawk, — all in all, playing his heedless pranks in the face of Nature with the zest of a reveller. But I came back wiser for the trip, since I learned once more what a friend I have in my imagination; and that, henceforth, I may have stars in the blackest sky, company when I will, and of the best kind, and good cheer for the asking. For this enchanter is given to all, and there is no defeat but it may turn into victory. To the

right imagination, Nature is thus only hints and outlines; actual beauty, a stray beam from the ideal; common men and women, but rude types of the heroes we may foresee and foreknow; and civilization, as it is, an insipid foretaste of the feast of life, to which, as oft as we please, we may invite ourselves. We may take wings when we like, and come into Paradise. We hold passports to Eden and the stars. Who can drag us into a dreary marsh or desert, when we may set ourselves at will into Arcadia or the Elysian Fields?

Of the many superficial and incidental occasions of cheer, too much trusted in by the careless, there need be uttered only a hint. The rich fountain lies deeper in our nature, as the best springs flow from the heart of the hills. We must have our light from the sun, and not from farthing candles. The king's jester, with his idle dawdling and smirks, was a poor substitute for royal nobilities and manly purpose. He drew but cheap and fleeting smiles over the darkened depths. They who look to minstrels and buffoons for their staple delights shall not know of the better gladness of life. Theatres and circuses are not to be taken too freely. Too many games shame us at length, as somewhat

low and unworthy, and we rise from them less cheerful than we sat down, as the victims of an evident robbery. Jokes and puns must be no more than the spice of the feast. I find my jovial friend wisely brings himself and others past his sparkle and rattle to the better meanings, and counts on sense and sobriety in the long run. A library of wits would sober and depress any sensible reader. Nor should we quote and adopt too much Milton's famous invocation: —

> "Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
> Jest, and youthful Jollity,
> Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
> Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles;"

for, although butterflies belong in the scenery, they do not make the real power and pleasure of the landscape. Our being seems to be wisely strung for a higher and nobler music; and harlequin will be found to have the lowest pulse in the company.

Above all, let us not look for happiness in any trick or drug. This angel is not found in hashish or Burgundy. It is not purchased by any low bargain. When the bacchanalian thinks he has got it, he has got something the most unlike it. The gods sell cheerfulness only at a

fair price. I went to see an old lady one day, who surprised me by saying, "I have all the joys I deserve, and I want no more."

The main secret of cheerfulness lies in character. Innocence is bathed in happy lights, and holiness is itself heaven. The perfect are the perfectly glad. Socrates said, "Virtue is the mother of pleasure;" and Wordsworth, "There is no happiness in this life without intellect and virtue;" and Sir Thomas Browne, "They are the happy in whom God is happy;" and One greater than these, "Happy are the pure in heart."

The conscience is a faithful officer of awards; and all the boastings of bullies and blacklegs belie themselves by a central tone of reproach and sadness. Sin yields bad dreams by night and bad memories by day, and there is no escape by flight, or opiate, or bribery. Sin involves broken relations with the universe, and self-banishment and discredit. The sinner has lost his protections. He dreads to turn the next corner, for he expects to meet an avenger. But holiness, on the other hand, fills our atmosphere with a sunshine and warmth as of the sweetest day in June. There is I know not what chemical charm in virtue, which touches the blood

and the soul and the entire world; and lo! they are new and joyful!

Our subject brings to notice one paradox, — the happy unhappy man or woman. I do not refer to that cold and sparkling light of sardonic wit, that Goethe has idealized with such success in his Mephistopheles, — the leer and laugh of a refined and cruel depravity, which is not musical nor joyous. There may be a grim delight in dissonance, a witty association of the laws and conditions of sin and disaster. The old proverb wrongly asserts, "It is time to laugh when matters can get no worse;" for it is then time to cry and repent. But we have the testimony of the great French chief of police, Fouché, that "the worst rogues generally jest and guffaw when they are at length caught." Even despair may find a ludicrous view of itself for an instant, as when a noted criminal on his way to the gallows advised his conductor to avoid a given street, as there was a man there who would have him arrested for a bad debt; and another, with the halter round his neck, blew the froth from a mug of beer, saying, "It is bad for health."

But the happy unhappy man is of another type. He is the chronic grumbler, to whom, we must believe bitter has become sweet. Gold-

smith's play of the "Good-Natured Man" very nearly miscarries and spoils the author's aim; for, in introducing Croaker, who makes such a luxury of misery, he well-nigh changes the moral of the piece. It is a question whether the serenity of the one, or the perversity of the other, is the more enjoyed. It is clearly a divided relish, when Honeywood says, "A fine day this, Mr. Croaker!" and Croaker replies, "What signifies what fine weather we may have in a country going to ruin like ours? Taxes rising and trade falling, money flying out of the kingdom and Jesuits swarming into it. I know at this time no less than a hundred and twenty Jesuits between Charing Cross and Temple Bar." The delight here is exquisite. But perhaps Charles Lamb introduces us to the best specimen of the Bittersweet family. He knew a card-player who was always growling out that he had no trumps. On one occasion they very adroitly contrived to give him all trumps; but this was only some more meat for his moody-pie. "A fool could play this hand," was his croaky comfort. There is nothing an Englishman so much enjoys, according to Sydney Smith, "as the pleasure of sulkiness." We all like to suck at these teats, now and then, which run

their cold gruel. "'Tis a fine thing," we grant you, "to be cheerful; but we beg your pardon, we have the dumps on hand just now, and take to their company."

There is, after all, a vein of the irresistibly comic about grumbling, that is possibly the secret of our affection for it, since, like comedy, it involves a ludicrous absurdity, — as of a sober man playing drunk; or an epicure, stuffed to bursting, declaring he has had not a crust to eat; or a millionnaire engaging quarters at the poor-house. It is a game of contraries, a pastime of perversities; and not a case for pity, and running for the doctor or minister. I do not agree with Sterne, who said, "I pity the man that can travel from Dan to Beersheba and exclaim, 'All is barren!'" For that is his highest privilege, the supreme success of the journey. You may look to see that man going that way again, after the same enchantment. Grumbling is his beatitude, without which life were cruel. And is it not possible that the Divine Goodness will set off some corner of heaven, or surrender a star, where this class may find everlasting delectation at croaking!

IV.

A LOW TONE.

"It is the witness still of excellence,
To put a strange face on its own perfection."
SHAKSPEARE.

"Lowliness is the base of every virtue;
And he who goes the lowest builds the safest.
My God keeps all his pity for the proud."
BAILEY'S FESTUS.

EVERY man has his native or acquired gravity, and the point predetermined, with the precision of fate, where he shall easily balance and may honestly and happily occupy. Every star has its true orbit; and every man, be he Cæsar or John Smith or Peter Simple, his rightful place; and to sink below this, or to mount above it, is to encounter sharp frictions and miseries. The height of good fortune is to find and keep our true poise and sphere; and humility, which we take to be spontaneity, a fine sense of reality, a good understanding and honest deal with nature, seems to be the best guide and guaranty to the end desired. For it does not set itself

down, and does not set itself up, but stands plainly, like every high and heroic trait, for what it is. A true lowliness is not so much in thought as in the absence of thought, or the better self wins its finest victories in our moods of oblivion. The man absorbed in his true task, intent only on serving, be he a hodman or a king, is always modest, and yet at his best.

"There are who despise pride with a greater pride," if we may believe Thomas Fuller, and credit our own eyes, which often observe the cant and posture of a vain lowliness. There is often a pert saintship lurking within a modest seeming, which will have all the world hear how finely it decries itself. It takes a low seat with one eye cocked to note who observes and admires; its humility wears a cockade, and watches how the hats come off to do it honor. "See me in the dust, do you not?" is its imploring bequest; and it would not mind a few laurels, and newspaper paragraphs, and private puffs, as a compensation of its rare meekness.

When Antisthenes saw Socrates going about in a torn coat, he showed a hole thereof to the people, saying, "Lo! through this hole I see the pride of Socrates." So English lords affect coarse cloth and bad hats, to pique and pamper

themselves with a sense of contrast; and genius — itself being judge — dons a frowzy guise and boorish airs, and would publish its wits by setting them in front of a witless background. An eminent man was accustomed to refer to his honorable pedigree, and then to add, "The fine blood has become water in my generation:" by which he meant his own praise, in a very roundabout way. Thoreau had a conceit of cheapness, and would dine off a cent: "I make my pride in making my dinner cost little," said the vain hermit, — vain as Astor and Stewart in making theirs cost much. But Diogenes was worse still; for he was not only vain of eating pounded peas and drinking out of his hand, but of his greasy coat and uncombed hair, and his old tub for a house. This is a vanity of rags, and is no more creditable than any other, as shrivelling may be as fatal a disease as swelling. It is a false by-play, the better to set off other qualities. The sediment of conceit is in all these cups, and many more like them, and obvious to any eye that looks. This is not self-forgetfulness and simplicity and finding one's true level, as the honest stars find their places, or the mist rises to its line of equipoise in the air, by giving Nature sway; but it is a shrewd way of denuding one's self

that others may cover him with garments of praise.

There is an Oriental story that shows the native sense of the Pagans against this pious trick. By their own claim and by popular credit, the Sufis were saints of the first rank; and one of them, as we are told, found his way to the gate of the Mahometan Paradise, and knocked that he might be let in to take his seat with the favored. "Who comes to the shining portal?" asked Allah. The Sufi replied, "One who is less than nobody." Allah took offence at this cant and misnaming of things, and responded with somewhat of severity in his tone, "Then thou art too little for heaven: seek thou some lower sphere." The saint turned away in deep thought, and speedily discovered that he had undershot the real mark, and rendered himself justly obnoxious to the reproach of Him who loves truth before all else. He saw there must also be conscience and soundness in humility, and that if he were a Sufi saint then he was one with Deity. And now, putting off a false modesty, and taking on a simple and real, he came again to the celestial gate, and gave a frank and hearty knock that told for itself. And from within the voice of

Allah was once more heard: "Who seeks to enter bliss?" The Sufi boldly replied, "'Tis thyself, Blessed Lord!" This time the shining door swung on willing hinges, for here was one who had learned that truth is the only modesty.

"If one be Cæsar," said Montaigne, "let him boldly think himself the greatest captain in the world." And we find Goethe doing the like, in his conversation with Eckermann; for he declared in plain terms wherein he had outdone Tieck, a fellow-poet of Germany, and then added, "I do not hesitate to speak of myself as I am: I did not make myself what I am." When occasion calls, it is modesty to affirm one's self in this frank way, and especially when all possible edge of conceit is turned or taken off by giving due credit to nature and circumstances. The truth may be thus told with an air that is clear of all taint of conceit. Let every one be as honest with his own talent as with any of the facts of the universe, for the perfect job is always in hewing to the line.

But if humility forbids the vanity of false abatements, so it does of false inflations, whereto we are ever the more inclined. For we are set by a natural impetus toward those things which

we are not but would be. Besides we find the times are more friendly to false airs and claims, and seem just on the eve of offering a premium on the very worst bloat of egotism and display. Put on airs, and you will be widely indorsed by the light weights, and taken to the bosom of showy society as its darling and delight. There is an itch for fine surfaces, and a reserve of further scrutiny. Make an appearance, keep costly turn-outs, have marble fronts, display gold and silver dishes, and support a box at the opera, — and who cares to look further? The devil is invited now-a-days, if he dress well and have his handkerchief scented. We dare not take our social pets in pieces, who come so finely robed and perfumed, and know how it is at their centres, — as the honest Englishman sawed into the head of the winking Madonna to know whether it was miracle or machinery. Our fashionable society is mainly a masquerade and matter of rich costumes, with no moral anxieties about what characters are concealed. It has slight basis, or none at all, in purity and honor, but only one in bank accounts and heavy expenses. It would be a sad burlesque on our nineteenth century to know the names and histories of all our parlor saints, and

whose arms are around our young ladies in the waltz, and by whom our ices and champagnes are despatched. Fashion is not fastidious, in any high sense; but has her cards given out on the most superficial grounds. We seem to have lost all power of vision but that of the outer and inferior eye, or have sold out our souls to our senses; and all that glitters we count for gold. A feather weighs down wisdom and character in our Pagan estimate; and how to make a show, which is the key to the honors of the time, is the prime question. What wonder then that life is rendered tumid and pretentious?

Whatever we may think of the root of ostentation buried in a high and aspiring nature, we can never love nor respect its bloom. It must be an arrested growth. All aristocracy is shoddy, and a little ridiculous and laughable, considering how plain and simple a true greatness always is, and how democratic and accessible. The great are never out of our reach, but obey a perfect law of condescension. Vanity is the attribute of a corporal and not of a general, who delights to have his uniform off. It is a juvenile trait, and falls off in time, where there is due progress, like the first set of teeth. It has some relation to a barbaric age, when the eye is smit-

ten with scarlet and deems tattooing a matter of first rank. It is always ignorance and never wisdom that swells and pretends. Plutarch wrote of scholars two thousand years ago what seems like an announcement of yesterday: "Those that went to the school of Athens were first of all *wise;* next lovers of wisdom; and at last, in course of time, plain common men; for the longer they applied themselves to study and philosophy, so much the more all vanity, pride, and pedantry abated in them, and the nearer they came to plain, downright, honest men."

We suspect at once the character that is too highly costumed, on the score that there is some need of thus drawing the attention from the centre to the surface, as Brag knows why he talks so loud. It is the quacks who advertise. A true friendship never protests and speaks out loud, but will act generously all day and every day, and be silent; and when any virtue plumes itself and shows off, there is defect somewhere. All egotism is slightly insane; indicates a little water on the brain, which more years and wisdom, save with the hopeless, will serve to trepan and let off. At fifty all but the worst cases are cured, and we have sound men and

women, whose words are low-toned; who criticise themselves; who hate sensations and shams; and who lose relation to the superficial aspects of the age, but to find relations to the universe. The man who has found life at length, — that precious elixir to be enjoyed without let or hindrance when found, — takes a story from his house, which twenty years ago he thought not large and grand enough; or sells out, and will have a modest retreat, sacred to the Muses and Penates and all his serious and weighty friends. There is a down that is up. The goal of all progress is realism and merit. A scientist told me that at first he used his magnifying-glass on everything, but that now he should prefer to use it on nothing, as he liked the perfect integrity of vision, seeing each thing, however minute, as it is. Varnish stands at some discount with the wise, who take more to a "dead finish," or the polish that the wood itself admits under plane and sand-paper, on which the eye reposes as on a real beauty. Tinsel is tawdry to those who have at length opened their best eye, and discovered the deeper realities.

The charm of humility is its morality. Its dozens always count twelve, and thirteen where there is liability of coming short. It

is a true and just metre. It is good all the way through like a Quaker box of strawberries. Humility is an Englishman of the better days of the island, — before the Britishers lost the rough, honest genius of their land and consented to masks, and in Sheffield sold polished iron for steel, and sizing for silk at Birmingham. Froissart relates of the English king, after the successful battle of Cressy: "The kynge wolde that no man shulde be proude or make boast, but every man humbly to thanke God."

Our word or deed is sublime when it hugs reality and speaks for itself. A report from the soul is another passage for the world's bible, and will be hailed as what all men have felt within themselves, but had not power to utter. Conscience is a royal trait. Paint and varnish betray the cheapness of our wood and the badness of our work; but what can equal the native grain and hue of mahogany, cherry, maple, or black walnut, which unadorned is adorned the most! There is no artificial ray like the sunbeam, which seems a part of the universe and self-sustained. Our affectations are cheap and quite outside of our better selves, like our garments which we lay off every night. It is life that is worth the while, how we are to our-

selves, whether full or void at the centre, and not what we are taken to be: Jesus outweighed all the Pharisees in Judea, and put wordy rabbis to silence with the simple words from his own fulness; and every one's joy and power are in the wit and worth of the private heart, which, in the end, we learn to cultivate and rely on.

We are great only when off guard. The minister's prayer is then prayer, and draws earth and heaven together: every heart knows the instant when he becomes impersonal, and passes into subordination to the Spirit, and is only a mouthpiece. We are speedily swept into the current and borne to the Infinite by the attractions of the self-forgetting saint. The orator never deals plainly and powerfully with his subject, till with his heat he has melted and dissolved himself. What so stupid as the first half-hour of a social circle, whilst self-consciousness and vanity hold their sway, and each one is there in his own name and personality; but reduce the memory and rub down the pride by a little plain-dealing in thought and act, and give the real life a chance, and what fine feats of ease and grace and joy will follow; and what victory over the hours like that which now transpires! No manners are ever the best man-

ners, since by the play of the spirit they are disengaged and free, and set infinitely above mannerism and book etiquette. They bend and sway with nature and are allied to poetry. They put Chesterfield and Beau Brummel to shame. The great actor does not thoughtfully and pompously play his part, but puts himself aside, and without thought or pride as if he were not himself but another, he lives it. It is humility which holds the highest secrets, and sets us at our best in every sphere.

There is always some avenging Nemesis sent in pursuit of a vain pride. The universe is pitiless in its treatment of this tumor. Who does not know the old smart under some caustic or other? The fates rally to humble the least show of conceit. Some invisible hand knocks off our ambitious top-knot just when we could least spare it. Indeed, here is our soaring Icarus with his wings melted off by the sun and ridiculously sunk in the mud; and what will we do but stand and laugh at him? But yesterday I heard a mother lamenting that she failed and suffered mortification every time she tried to set off the baby to specially fine effect, as if the little one had entered into some mischievous conspiracy with an evil genius to cover her with

shame. The boys and girls in our schools, I notice, who spell with some pomp, and as to the committee and visitors, are the first to blunder, because they have their eye off the right point; they lose sight of the act in watching for its effect, and blindly run into some ditch; or their loud and showy manner is seen to be mere parroting and trick, and passes for nothing with the sensible people, who are waiting to hear the modest boy or girl whose act will be simple and steeped with merit. The vanity of Don Quixote covered him with disgrace, and every new blunder was worse than the last: it was a cruel succession of mortifications, for which nobody pitied him, but all said, "Served him right! he should have taken the advice of his humble squire." Sophomoric gas will not burn on those occasions where light is most needed; and the less said among the really wise about Greek roots and the problems in Euclid, the better. Whether man or maid, the swell should see instantly, on the faces of the company, that there is no favor with the high-minded and worthy, but disgust at the sight of this air and assumption. There is no kind of ballooning that is so safe and respectable as travel on the solid earth: the going up may be gay, but who will venture insurance on

the coming down? The happy circumstance with the lowly is that they stick close to reality and stand always on the firmest hardpan, and clear the humiliating punishments, — all the more humiliating that they provoke our smiles instead of our pity. There is no disaster so much to be dreaded as collapse after display, since it reveals both poverty of talent and character.

> "The man, in troth, with much ado
> Has proved that one and one make two,"

and is thenceforth rated as one among the many bubbles. Conceit is always a fine mark for mischievous archers, there being we know not what charm in witnessing the flutter and tumble of this plumed bird. What invites a knife like a bladder or bloated nothing? The whole universe will tug at a stumbling-block to have it set in the way of vanity, and will hide away and chuckle to see the fall and the chagrin!

When Thor, with Thialfi and Loki, went forth, with an air of great self-consequence, to visit and stun with astonishment the Jotuns or Giants, they were of course outwitted and beaten at the games of their own proposing, and returned disgraced from their attempted display. Who could eat but Loki? and straightway he challenged to an eating-match, which

Logi very modestly accepted. Beginning at the two ends of a long large trough, they met half way. But it was found that the boasting Loki had eaten only the flesh, whilst Logi had eaten flesh, bones, and trough itself. Who could run but Thialfi, the fleet, claiming to be swifter than the reindeer or the wild gazelle? He challenged to a race; but Hugi, the giant, made the whole distance before his opponent had started. Who could drink but the great Thor, whose thirst was like the desert, and whose stomach like a cloud? But a cup which he could not empty at three draughts yielded a Jotun just a sip, and left him still athirst. But Thor was filled with proud wrath, and would wrestle with the best of them. And they pitted against him Elli, a toothless and withered old crone, who flung him in an instant and taunted him for his pretentious pusillanimity. Alas for Loki, Thialfi, and Thor, the cream of the Norse heroes! But if the immortals and gods are tripped by their conceit, or cut asunder from the sources of power and put to shame, what can you and I expect of safety from airs and assumptions!

Vanity is the talent of failures. It is blinded and corrupted by self-admiration, and has an

incapacity to know merit from demerit; spins like a foolish top in its own little centre, and loses its relations to the sources of power; goes to seed in the husk of its own conceit, and is a windfall; withdraws from out-of-doors and the universal currents, which are ever setting in the right directions and will carry us far if we will but fling ourselves into them. The great step is out of self. He who can be nobody will be somebody. Leave your little coop and come under the sky, if you would be and do greatly and wisely. Sink the personal in the universal, and your word and act shall be a part of nature and a sure victory. A good divine once said to me that he never went to a hard duty in his own name and power, but slipped out of himself by an act of prayer into the keeping and control of the Spirit: the hard was easy then, for he had engaged the Infinite in his service. It is this higher bond with the divine that draws on the courage of the martyr. Every great artist subordinates his personality to beauty, and his picture takes rank with the sunset: it is really a piece of skill from the same hand working a little further off. The great poet throws himself on the Muse, or the genius of the universe, and sings the songs that are brought him out of

the *Arcana;* and they are good for all time, because wrought from the music of the spheres or the notes that sound at the heart of the universe and are not temporal. Can you work for a cause, and lose sight of yourself in doing it? Can you tie to a principle? Can you worship an end and make an idol of an idea? Can you waive your claim as Clement or Clementina, and moil and toil with a free and glad surrender of body and soul for any one of the divine aims of the world? Then you shall have a better reason and power than your own playing into and through you; by this shift of the personal for the impersonal, which is a feat of true humility, you have touched the batteries that are always charged with the finest and best serving electricity of the universe; it is an exchange of weakness for power; or, as Emerson well says, "Instead of the tanks and buckets of knowledge to which we are daily confined, we come down to the shore of the sea, and dip our hands in its miraculous waves." "I think the thoughts of God," was the profound remark of Kepler, who had risen out of himself and yielded to the courses and spirit of Nature, —

> "Searching, through all he felt and saw,
> The springs of life, the depths of awe,
> To find the law within the law."

The modest eye has the perfect vision, and succeeds to a just reading of the divine order and meaning. It is self that is perverted and that perverts; that is the victim of a whim; that stands in its own light; that has a deceiving saffron in its eye; that has a crotchet in its brain. We must waive our impertinent claims and surrender to the universe, if we would be wise and move on with success to any worthy result. Vanity plays a low and poor game to its own eye, or to the eye of the public, and is drawn from the secret drill and drudgery in shirt-sleeves and free perspiration, which alone can make anything of anybody. It is under some innate necessity of slighting the first steps to success, which lie in private and secret ways, like the roots of all great trees. It is spoiled by its morbid and impatient craving of publicity; whilst humility will begin at the bottom, and be true to all the needful stages and prosper; as Michel Angelo quarried, ground and mixed his paints, and worked at every process, coarse and fine, and had his skill amply based.

Greatness is a child of solitude. Genius grows up in the by-ways of the world and does not know itself, and is apt to be something less when at length it surprises its own secret. All that

has been verified of Shakspeare can be written on the palm of your hand, and the historians and critics vainly attempt to add anything. Homer has no biography, as if he were born full grown and spirited away at last. "You shall make yourself dust to do anything well," said Saadi. The secret seems to be to do our work for its own sake, forgetting self and the public; to fall in love with some shining ideal and have perfection our aim; to have the victory in making a finished job, whatever may become of it after it is done; to yield all the forces of our life in rapt consent to this end. But only the lowly in spirit can do this. The vain can never lay by their trumpets and forego applause to that extent that they may set themselves in the best relations to their work and the times they live in. They must be superficial and sensational by the law of their nature, and so shall fail in all but cheap and fleeting results. They will for ever bring painted mist and banners, and not solid deeds.

The great and real make a jest of this showy sunflower of conceit that lifts its head so pompously above the rest of the garden. The ancients likened the futile hue and cry and boasting of vanity to the travail of a mountain that brings

forth a mouse. Agesilaus said of a conceited orator who plead a petty cause with great ado, "I don't think much of that shoemaker that makes a great shoe for a little foot." But Montaigne's satire is still better: "When I hear our architects thunder out their bombast words of pilasters, architraves, and cornices, of the Corinthian and Doric orders, and such like stuff, my imagination is presently possessed with the palace of Appollidonius in Amadis de Gaul; when, after all, I find them but the paltry pieces of my kitchen-door." We join these old verdicts so far as we have the weight and sincerity of the ancients. Modesty carries the sympathy of the wise and good. Nature always commands the best votes. "I think breakfasts so pleasant," wrote Sydney Smith to a friend, "because no one is conceited before one o'clock." The Scotch have a proverb that the greatest bummer is never the best bee, or spending on noise is nothing. It is a happy success, never lost on the elect, to furnish a maximum of results with a minimum of advertisement; or they like the inspirations of the Sibyl, but not the contortions, since these are for the vulgar. The charm and credit of a low bearing and plain-dealing with all matters are taken note of by the fine vision, and wherever these

merits are found the worthy eye rests and gives greeting.

The vain have often a core of soundness left, knowing what sugar is sweet or wisdom wise, and are themselves pleased with the modest realities. We fancy the attraction of the country to our fashionable city population, who seem secretly to despise their circles and habits, and more and more go to live by the ocean and among the hills, — shunning the bedizening summer resorts, — lies in the plain, homespun guise of all their surroundings, — the quiet cottage, the relief from insane baggage, the low count of daily toilets, the easy attitude and sensible conversation at table, the absence of flash and fustian, and escape from the painful sense of playing a high game for a low end. There is good reason to suspect, could we but set an ear at the keyhole of many a Fifth Avenue palace in the high carnival season, we should hear terms of some disgust. Is it one reason why Englishmen and Americans shy and hide away, choose a seat by themselves in saloon and car, ride all day in a stage-coach and say never a word, order a private parlor at a hotel, dodge their friends on the street, have a headache or a previous engagement made afterwards to keep them

from the party, — that they dread their inevitable affectation and pride if they permit themselves in company? Do they feel that they should be guilty of a parade which would belie them and lessen their self-respect? Is vanity the ghost they fear will make its appearance on the least temptation? Is it that they are more humble and honest with themselves than with others? I have long regarded the extreme of fashion as painful to itself; and notice that the snobs of both sexes wear on their faces an introverted sneer and a slight air of discontent, as if they knew the exact state of their case and thought little of themselves, whatever others might think of them. Vanity is still apologetic and creeps on its way. Every head that is carried above its rightful level has broken with the sense of a perfect veracity, and its lofty air is at the cost of an inward shame, and the better eye is downcast and retiring like that of any rogue.

There are three prescriptions for this swelling and weakness, which, after our hasty diagnosis, it will do to bring to the reader's notice.

1. We must measure from ourselves up, and not often from ourselves down, as the habit is with the proud. If there are wiser and better men and women than we with a tithe of our aids and

helps, as there are by the colony, it is at least a hint that modesty would fit our case. Would Epaminondas, Phocion, Pericles, Plato, more than two thousand years ago, have boasted of our degrees of attainment? or would they not shame us if they were to stand by us to-day, like oaks beside saplings? I am humbled when I look up to the stars, —

> "For merit lives from man to man,
> And not, O Lord! from man to thee," —

and lives from man to man, in its own estimate, only as there is the vain downward look from self to inferior ranks. "Some knowing the lowness of their parts," said Thomas Fuller, "love to live with dwarfs that they may seem proper men." Vanity chooses to be great among the small. Dr. Johnson kept inferior company for social background to his own figure; and it is not uncommon, — this one and the other pluming themselves that they are not the worst people in the community, as if it were a merit and mark of greatness never to have got into the police court. The better relations are ignored, and conceit is fostered by noting those contrasts only which are in its own favor.

But suppose the outlook to be from ourselves

upward, as it should; — whether for example and influence, or for a better test of our rank and standing. Where is pride now? After reading of Socrates and that fatal dish of hemlock, which he so freely drank rather than compromise a purpose; or of John Rogers and that wreath of cruel flames which did not daunt him; or Fox's "Book of Martyrs," with its stories, stranger than fiction, of love and life that looked not back on the death-march, but went straight on with firm tread, — who may not feel humble in this matter of courage? Would we stick as they did, and so honor God and our own natures? Would we burn sooner than turn? I fear not one of us. I read of John Howard and Florence Nightingale, and my humanity lays a finger on her lip and hunts for a low seat. I see Galileo buffeted, Columbus baffled, Garibaldi checked and put off, Garrison mobbed and balked, but each still keeping firm to his aim; and I seem only worthy to sit at their feet and do them reverence. Let us stand up beside the Hebrew peasant from Nazareth, and the Jewish fishermen and tent-makers who rallied to his standard, and see how we look who have their example and eighteen centuries in our favor. Let us daily set our atom against

the Infinite, and know the measure of our dependence for all things, and cast forth vanity as the vice of fools and the profane.

2. Another fine antidote to all symptoms of bloat is a broader and closer intimacy with Nature, which breathes everywhere the spirit of simplicity and reality. The modesty of earth and sky is conspicuous, and healthful to the soul that lies open to it. What is better calculated to look pride out of countenance, and draw on a beautiful and happy simplicity, than the land, the air, the forests, the waters, the stars, the unpretentious merit of the sun itself? How humbly and loftily the world greets us, and draws us apart from all our priggish and surface ways, as mere chaff compared with a life that lies hidden within us. The spirit of the universe impresses us as something disengaged from itself and as noble and beautiful because overflowing; and we happily yield to its modest sway.

If there is in Nature's spirit and style, at any point, the least hint of display, she speedily checks and shames it, as much as to say to us, "Such things are cheap, and not to be counted on." How is the peacock's tail avenged by ugly feet and a bad voice; and the best civilization has read this bird out of the list of the beautiful

and creditable. The family of comets, the peacocks of the sky, are clearly not favorites, since they are admitted to the front but seldom, and are speedily sent to the rear. The flaming meteors that rush so gaudily into our sky are refused resource, as a wise parent denies a vain child — bent on expensive show — money to carry out an idle purpose. The rainbow is regarded as something too pert, and is straightway dissolved. The gaudy sunset is swiftly dashed by soberer hues; the ambitious colorist is instantly caught at his game, and his bedizening crimson and purple are hidden by neutral tints. Even floral beauty is treated summarily, as if its influence were not altogether healthful: the orchards are not permitted long their holiday costumes; the clover-field is but briefly encouraged in its burst of glory; and the gardener laments that his favorites, the callas and peonies, are so short-lived; whilst we all know, who have watched with half an eye, how evanescent is the perfect bloom of the human body, what a fading charm, — to-day it is and to-morrow it is not, refusing to stay, however we coax it! But a lower beauty fades that a higher may appear. These things are but secondary, and an offence if they stir pride and give it the upper

hands of modesty; and Dame Nature removes the temptation. She tolerates no foolish display, but, showing us what she might do but will not, her average bearing is a wise and cheerful gravity. We must come to her with a plain and pure heart, and shall return from our communions still more chastened and genuine. We get from her the high secret, reflected in all fine art as well, and in all great lives of men and women not less, that humility is the beginning of wisdom and the key to content and progress.

3. A humble bearing attends a substantial education. If we would have modesty take root in our schools and at our firesides, and pervade our youth, our culture must not begin with French and an ambitious parade of high-sounding studies; must not be, as we fear it too often is, a training for parlors and the ends of pride in general, — in other words, an insane dependence on varnish and gilding. Our mode of discipline is too pretentious, and infects our youth with giddiness. Our children are blown up like bladders; and often, after a protracted academy course, set their minds against the wind and they would blow away. We can never have modesty but from a less superficial and vain education. Let us dispense with exhibi-

tions and banners, premiums and prizes, which spoil alike teachers and scholars; for such lures lead *from* the path instead of on it, or to the extent that you buy up ambition you cheapen character and lessen the worth of the work done as discipline. Better a little for itself than much for some lower end. Better a little modest and sound learning that gives weight and worth to life, that can speak in its own name, that can light its own path like the firefly, that renders one a stubborn fact in this fleeting world, than volumes of lore gathered to the surface, which is a vanity of culture and a learned ignorance. Let us make a sober and earnest work of getting wisdom, and attempt less to accomplish more; and the effect on character will be as marked as on the intellect.

V.

CONTENTMENT.

"Our content
Is our best having."

SHAKSPEARE'S HENRY VIII.

"It is the mynd, that maketh good or ill,
That maketh wretch or happie, rich or poore:
For some, that hath abundance at his will,
Hath not enough, but wants in greatest store;
And other, that hath litle, askes no more,
But in that litle is both rich and wise;
For wisdome is most riches: fooles therefore
They are, which fortunes doe by vowes devize;
Sith each unto himselfe his life may fortunize."

SPENSER'S FAERIE QUEENE.

THE faces one meets on the sidewalk, with the exception of two or three in a thousand, have a discontented and restless look, as if, for some reason, life were not carried by gravitation on oiled grooves, but by painful forcing. The effect of a stroll on Broadway or Beacon Street, as through Five Points and North Street, is depressing to a sensitive nature, lowers the tone of the most cheerful spirit;

and, on getting home, unless one finds a contented friend, a sunny volume, a cat, a dog, some flowers, or other piece of real and charming life, the bad effect holds for an evening, and must be slept off like a pain in the head. At our operas and concerts, where gay costumes and the fine magic of music heighten the lights, the shadowy lines of our modern life are quite discernible: the smiles are often forced; the applause is not hearty, nor in the same major key as the composer's notes. Here are men present in body, but absent in spirit, evidently drawn away from the gay scene into some ugly strife with mathematics and percentages; and women, afflicted with the weariness of much dressing; and you shall not come away without need of some reactionary tonic to set you once more right with yourself and the world.

The age is restless and expectant. The present hour is deemed empty and ill. To-day is not the day we want. In December we sigh for June; in May, October is our month. And it is easy to see in the shifting kaleidoscope of society, the running to and fro, as if half the world were just arriving and the other half just departing, that the old maxims of discontent hold a despotic and wide sway over men and women.

Here are manufacturers who would be merchants, — no more creators, but peddlers; mariners who think the sea is too wide and noisy, too open and public, and, in order to felicity, they must find inland cots secluded and quiet; farmers who are holding a quarrel with privacy, and are looking to a settlement in town and sea-voyages next year and every year; honest men sighing for politics, and ruined politicians smarting at heart, and regretting they ever came out of an innocent sphere. Everywhere labor is not in demand, is not well paid, suffers from bad climate, can have no friends, no promotion, no holidays, and is about to strike its tent and emigrate. The country is too old in this place, too new in that; in one quarter there is too much winter, and in another not enough, and the right degree of latitude seems to be left out. Housekeeping is exchanged for boarding, and boarding for housekeeping; and more and more are falling into this pitiable game of shuttle to a web of domestic routs and removals. Society is on the chase for a fresh batch of novelties, new turns in affairs, untried sensations, more wonders, and later and larger miracles, as if it had been unhinged and spoilt by too much display of an opening world, or as if the habit

of the century were against us and likely to breed in all a restless temperament.

"Any time but now;" "anywhere but here;" "any thing but this:" these are the terms of our daily wails, and betray our desire to escape from ourselves and our circumstances. But every sensible person must see that the granting of our prayers will not stay our complaint. Our remedy is not remedial. For who is Time that he can work any miracle for us to-morrow that he cannot to-day? Is not any day every day? Time is indifferent and wears a uniform face from year to year, or opens to us the same waiting void. And it is not otherwise with space. Restless people will travel from Dan to Beersheba and find it Dan all the way, and as far beyond as they may please to go, with their present cheap and superficial habits. Many Americans think contentment is in Europe, and Europeans in America; but they learn on trial that these are both one country, bounded by the same sky, swept by the same air, fertile with the same nettles. Here are Bostonians and New Yorkers packing their trunks to go abroad in search of some enchanted city, where all things favor and the fever of unrest never comes. They think to find and dally

with the mild-eyed Dame who enchants with perfect repose, in Paris; but they reach Paris to discover that she left the day before for Rome; at Rome they are one train too late; they hasten to Florence, to Venice, to Berlin, but with no better success, — always a little behind time, and only see the skirts of the retreating goddess. They pursue a flying Beauty, who will suffer no lightning express to overtake her on the proposed line. What is so bad as a misplaced trust? Space is indifferent, save in some slight ways that lie quite on the surface and can only affect curiosity. Anywhere is everywhere. The first horizon is like the last, here and there the same clear-cut line against the sky. The sun rises and sets after one fashion in all lands, and holds his way through a firmament so uniform you would think, at the north or the south pole, you had never seen another. Staple habits of the people are quite similar in all quarters. Where do they not wear hats and shoes, tell stories, buy and sell for gain, court and marry and keep house, have a daily dinner, and take a little wine for the stomach's sake, and forget to pay their debts and do as they would be done by? Geography is pretty much a delusion with its

idle talk about here and there; and travel is still a staying at home in most particulars.

But if time and space are decoys and lure us to no end, or do not serve us with the grace we seek, but rather make a mock at our prayer, shall we fare better by being shifty in our pursuits and leaving one trade or craft to settle ourselves in some other? Everybody thinks everybody but himself has a charmed calling. But who believes a universal rotation among our restless workers would set matters to rights? All work is very much the same thing; and the spirit that chafes in any sphere, and would shirk and run, would be likely to do the same thing in every sphere. A wrong spirit will never find the right labor; whilst an earnest soul can hardly miss of a welcome task, since it will contrive to fit itself to what seems unfit, and force some degree of poetry into the hardest prose; as Basle, according to the legend, changed the infernal pit, into which he had been cast, into a Paradise and drew the best angels to his presence, by his happy complacency and fine gift of making good of the bad.

The world in one view of it is bankrupt and has little to give but that which we carry to it. The contented people have all brought content-

ment with them. We shall find at last that the man is every thing; the time, place, and office, next to nothing. The universe borrows all it confers, as the good wife makes her husband a Christmas or birthday present with the money he supplies. The world's complexions are reflections, and its voices are echoes, which accord with the states of our deeper life. The birds have stolen our songs, and are only passing them back, or only they hear them who are in tune with them and make like strains in their own hearts. A healthy tongue imparts the sweetness to sugar; and, if that member be foul, the bees of Hymettus can gather nothing to our taste. To a faulty eye other beauty is no more beautiful; and to a defective ear all music is no music. The face that looks out upon you from the mirror is your own; and the universe is but a larger mirror, wherein we see ourselves. To the empty soul the world is a vacuum, and all seems on the eve of collapse, but to the full soul it is charged and surcharged with beauty and life, and trembles with pent forces. A sufficing selfhood subordinates circumstances, and overflows and inundates all situations with its own beauty, serenity, and satisfaction. The great are contented any-

where; deem all fortune good fortune; cannot be caught in darkness any more than the glow-worm that carries his own light; have the world painted from their supply of fine colors; enchant all times with the precious magic of their natures: for they are not dependants and beggars, but sovereigns and all-sufficient to endow the world and the times with an air of peace.

The prime secret of contentment is a fulness of life constituted of noble qualities, the law of which is a deep harmony and peace. The ages have furnished men and women, whose names are dear to our lips, who did not need to run away from themselves; and did not want to do so. Life abounded with them; and what would they more? The poorest man of history, as we well remember, still talked of "my peace" and "my joy;" for his life was full and rich and could not be distracted by events.

> "Sunshine was he in a winter's day;
> And in midsummer, coolness and shade."

Who can think of Plato standing on the corner of the street and meditating how he might elude himself? — Plato, who had but to sit still in the centre of his own lofty and cultivated nature, and the universe crowded to entertain him!

Who recalls Wordsworth as one running round with hat in hand, begging of untried scenes and sounds a pittance of respite from present unrest? — him, whose life was sufficiency and repose, like that of Nature. It was Channing who could write in his early years, "I am independent of the world;" but he was so because he had built a world of his own of better and stabler and more sufficing material; or, rather, because he had found and entered the real world, of which this that we see is but a dim and crude shadow.

After the siege and capture of Megara, some one asked Stilpo whether he had not suffered particular damage in the plundering: to which he made answer, "There is nobody can rob Stilpo but Stilpo." His wealth was himself, and self-protected. His riches were not of this world, and did not lay open to prowlers and purloiners. Whatever was taken was a matter of comparative indifference, since *he* was left; that is, the self-poise and riches of character set all else in the relation of trinkets, or the rattles and straws that please children, as they who have the light of the sun can spare the stars, or as the sense of immortality subordinates days and events, and we waive slight matters by saying, "'Twill be all the same a hundred years hence."

Greatness is peace. Fine qualities suffice themselves. Beauty always bears the air of self-content, — not of vain self-complacency, but a perfect poise and satisfaction, like that which attends all true conditions. What would the lily be but the lily? All high art strikes one as in a state of rest, and directly calms the appreciative beholder by drawing him into its own serene state. A perfect picture, or statue, or dome might well exist for itself, as if its being were the end of ends, and the charm of its serenity quite enough. We all sometimes find in our own centres such a fund of ideas and calm life that an invitation abroad would seem an impertinence; any company would banish us to solitude; any change would be a distraction. When we are full thus of a finely balanced being, the best powers in active play, we find ourselves quite able to dispense with both memory and hope, as the present realizes our prayers. There is an inner light that can dispense with the sun and not say, "All is dark!" It is a happy conclusion that the world is coming to at length, that heaven is holiness, or *wholeness*, as the word means, or a full tide of life, and that flying to the stars has nothing to do with it.

It will greatly add to the pleasure of our tasks and promote contentment, if we can feel the presence and play of some high principle in all we do, as if there were an angel in every act. The soul delights in its own overflows. The conscience is never set forward to the front and made leader of our forces in vain. Content is in rising into true and worthy relations in every deed, as the needle's rest is in finding its north in every place. We are constituted to feel the charm of the elevated motions of our nature, as if we were to be thus lured and kept up to the best levels, and so well paid as we go on with our duties that we should forget the past and the future in the satisfaction of the moment. He is the happy and satisfied workman who sees character and credit reflected in his work. The merchant's store stands under an approving and protecting sky, and invites him like a palace, if he feels his honor every time he enters it; and, like one who goes for a promised favor, he will not be loath to turn his feet in that direction. Labor and trade are enchanted and held in a contented and serene frame by their moral aspects. It is our shams and cheats that shame and distract us; and we shall impatiently endure them as low expedients,

not to our better liking or good name. Dishonesty sets us into Hades, where none care to take up their abode ; and so we play doubly false, adding crime to crime, thrusting a bold and reckless hand into what is not ours, that we may the sooner win and run from our sharp discontent. The game is not itself a satisfaction, like an honest calling, but a torment from which we would fly, even stealing our wings to hasten flight.

Our relations to our callings and crafts are quite too low and sordid, too selfish and carnal, too negative and neglectful of the soul and all the better motives, like leaving life out of the aims of living, and need revision in the interest of our higher nature. A merely *cent-per-cent* aim in work belittles us, and affords us no solace. The worship of money is not a manly devotion. Gold is a low end. But it is less sufficing still to regard labor simply as a carnal prudence, a purveyor to our stomachs and procurer of more shirts and better shingles to cover us. For the Genius of the lower necessities, with lash in hand and ready for use, wears ever a cold and unwelcome face, and is a driver with whom we can hardly make amicable terms. Who likes this hard dictation? Gods are we, and yet in slavery to bread-and-butter! Immor-

tals, but bound hand and foot by beds and dinners! Who will pull his oar and turn his spit thus in contentment? The motive is too low to cheer and satisfy. Let us set our tasks in nobler lights, and put our higher life into them; let us honor our work, and derive honor from our workmanship; and servitude will give place to freedom. There will ever a beautiful angel look out upon us from every honest and fine piece of handicraft, or noble dealing, or honest word; and we shall sing at our tasks, and take the first and best instalment of our recompense out of the deed itself, if we will make a fine art of it. The farmer's reward should consist largely in the straightness of his furrow; the inventor's, in the perfection of his machine; the tailor's, in the fit of his coats; the teacher's, in the promptitude and correctness of the pupil's answers; the housekeeper's, in the tidiness and homeness of the house, so that the refined will delight to come to it; the poet's, in his

"Mellow metres more than cent per cent;"

and the painter's, in the life and power of his pictures, which happily react on his own sensibilities, as, according to mythology, Pygmalion's

beautiful ivory statue of woman enamoured him, and, in answer to his prayers, was endowed by the gods with life, and became his bride. Many a man's work is his sweetheart; and every man's may be, if he will give the best part of himself to it, — his thought and character. When our deeds are our children, the offspring of our love and choice, and not bastards, we shall dote on them and find in them a true happiness and contentment. When our toiling and trafficking are faithful, and fair as the open day to look at, and speak our praise and carry everywhere our creditable introduction, we shall find the busy days and years are none too long, and that work is its own sufficient reward. The pay is instant, and guaranteed by a better purser than the banks employ.

We cannot say it too often, nor with undue stress, that to the right laborer who puts his whole soul into his work, the hammer's stroke will be music; the chirp of the smoothing plane, a song as of a lark or bobolink; the washing of dishes, a pastime; hoeing of potatoes, a fine sport; wood-chopping, poetry; and that the worthy writer's unfolding sentence will glow before his eye like a line of morning light; and the statesman's honest service to the pub-

lic, morally worthy an Aristides or Washington, will be a sacred delight to his mind and heart.

But labor shall make still further gain of contentment, by seeing itself in its remoter relations and uses. Every task, that is legitimate, is linked to the universe and subserves high ends. All work has a humanitarian and honorable aspect; runs parallel with the aims and uses of Providence; shares the dignity of Nature's processes; and every true worker is fellow to all the ranks including the Deity himself. Why hold ourselves so cheap, and carry our heads down, and wish we had something worthy to do? For, if we will only see it, our station is already sublime. Is not the locksmith a high custodian of valuables, and, with Morpheus, a patron of sleep? Does not the bootblack, like a humble creator, contribute somewhat to universal beauty, — the wash and varnish of the world? Shall not the evening lamplighter and the morning sun strike hands, as being in the same line of business? Does not the sailor hold nations together by drawing back and forth threads of all textures, and insure a system of exchanges that is tantamount to an equalization of climates and skills? What is the coal miner

doing but working that high miracle of creating June in December, or bringing Florida into all the regions within the snow-line, for our good-cheer? or is he not supplying motive power, — manageable wind and tide, — to bring and carry commodities, and take us to our friends and to the ends of the earth? Drag him from his place, dark and obscure as it is, and where will be the bland air of your parlors with the mercury down to zero outside, and your journeys with the speed of eagles and carrier-pigeons across continents and oceans? Let him see that he is a benefactor, and take a manly and self-poised bearing. If any man reclaims an acre of sand by irrigation, or of bog by draining, and makes it green and blooming, let him carry his head erect on his shoulders, and see that his work is not unworthy of Him who, in meadow and prairie, has wrought to the same end. This man with his hoe and spade is a joint creator of beauty and provender for coming generations.

All worthy tasks reach on thus, as if they furnished a strand of use and beauty to run co-extensive with the whole web of our civilization. There is a *minder* in this world-mill, as in those at Lowell, who attends with a sharp and constant eye and keeps every thread in place to the

end. Providence is an economist of power and results, and what is once well done is done for ever. There is a soul in each good deed that is immortal. The farmer drops not a potato but it looks to muscle, and through muscle to mind, and through mind to the perfect destinies; or the first and last of things are tied together. A word is more than air, as it passes our lips; a blow tells on the planets; our deeds are shadows of an eternal substance; work is the only prophet, and nothing is clothed with so much of dignity. Toil holds the ages and æons in its debt, and should carry its head among the stars, and dwell in a state of perfect peace.

Labor needs to look through a telescope to see its own merit in full. Going with a friend one day to see the new marvel, a steam-shovel, I observed to him that it was fellow to all the scholars and preachers in the land; and, coming to an Irishman, on our return, who was spreading the last car-loads of dirt, dumped on forty feet or more of filling, I said to him, "So you are building a *highway*." "Yes," said he, "and for the Lord." This was, no doubt, a cheap reply, caught from an easy and old association of words; any child might have said it; but it need not have been cheap, but one of the grand-

est of answers; and I would gladly believe that, for the once, Patrick rose to a full comprehension of himself, and was shovelling there with a dignity and serenity like the shining of the stars.

It is higher aims and better spirit and truer work that shall signify, and not so much additional holidays and special privileges, of which so many of our restless toilers are in quest: still, respites for breath and pleasure are in order, and should be of frequent occurrence. The secret of a richer peace lies in an improved industry. Our eagles must show their gift of wings by lofty flights, and see and feel they are not buzzards. Self-respect is a *desideratum;* but this comes only of self-fidelity and good jobs. The shirk knows nothing of the contentment of labor, but only of its weariness and impatience; whilst the swindler at his task, whether with weights and measures, putty and paint, or what not, shall through shame desire to cut and run. Nothing satisfies but honest performance. In lieu of honor in the work, it is futile to squander on cigars, cups, revels, pleasures, saloons, and boon companions. The bargain is a bad one and will not stick. Instead of one demon, we shall then be pursued by two,

the ghosts of our bad work and our bad habits. The only remedy is to feel our manhood. If money is named in the bond, let the motive from day to day not be mercenary. It lies with the employer to draw the employed out of this low limbo, by establishing relations that bring esteem and friendship to the aid of service, disenchanting labor of the sense of servitude, setting in play the positive and willing powers, sharpening the eye to detect the best methods and finish, nerving the arm to faster and heavier strokes, and making ten hours seem not more than six.

A peaceful life implies, further, a due balance of capacity and ambition; or a ready and hearty and graceful agreement with necessity, on the terms it sees fit to impose. We need a willing respect for limits, as they are set in the nature of things, a good understanding with fate, a happy consent unto what must be, as an ancient, when told he must die to-day, said wisely, "It is well: I expected to die to-morrow." To be beforehand with our lot is to be at peace. There is the true wisdom in the Persian poet's advice: —

> "Offer up thy heart to Him,
> Who else, unasked, will take it."

The Mahometan prayer was framed in a lofty

and rational spirit, which it is the best of fortune to have attained: "O God, make me to wish not the acceleration of what thou hast delayed, nor the delay of what thou hast accelerated." The "not my will, but Thine be done," of the Nazarene, is in the triumphant key, and a clue to composure. And many have greeted thus what came, and won the victory of victories. I knew a farmer who thought all weather the best weather; a barren year good as a fruitful one, as giving the earth a needed rest or sort of Sabbath; and who never quarrelled with the qualities and capacities of the soil, but took it gladly as it was, and accepted white beans with the same grace that he would wheat. He had a song wherewith to welcome the stern New England winter; and, in all states of earth and air, serenity attended him like an angel. His submissions were easy and graceful, or were none at all, as desire seemed always to be in advance of wisdom and duty. His concession was an instinct and ahead of calculation, and ever left his face short and cheerful.

We can never too much admire the wisdom of Mahomet who, when the hill would not come to him, gracefully yielded and went to the hill.

There is no fate to the willing, as we conquer our enemy by taking his side. Blessed is the man who can contentedly give up what he must. But more blessed he who never sends his wishes and intents beyond his sphere, nor chafes at the view of heights he cannot scale! Nothing, except virtue, is so friendly to contentment as modesty in our spirit and some reserve in our aims, since we shall thus outrun our expectations and happily surprise ourselves by our own merits. What a folly is this incurable itch for offices beyond their reach, which distracts so many of our citizens of small calibre! And often success is babyish, and dies broken-hearted for more success. Here is Brushsythe complaining among the hedges that he is not Scissors behind the counter; Hobnail is wretched at the anvil because it is not an easel; but the fine arts, for which he has no fitness, would only throw him into another fever of unrest. Competence is sore at not being affluence; plainness sees only the beauty to which it was not born, and sighs and squanders health like a mess of pottage to compass the impossible; talent struggles with destiny to become the genius it was not made, — wears a Byron collar, makes free of gin and green tea, and submits to the "contortions of the Sibyl,

without her inspirations." But the chapter of discontents is endless; and it must suffice to name once more the remedy for this phase of the disease, — the just balance of capacity and ambition. Let us respect and not force the laws of nature. Let us shorten the demand, if we cannot increase the supply. Contentment is by wise limitation. Burns found it through the fine instinct and self-poise of his nature, and sung, —

> "What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
> Wear hodden gray, and a' that."

And if he had done his best, and come to a just understanding of his case, we cannot too much commend

> "Honest John Tompkins,
> The hedger and ditcher,
> Who, though he was poor,
> Didn't want to be richer."

There is one more source of a deep and real content in life, open to all, that will bear naming in this connection. It is of the utmost importance to hold open and constant relations with the benefits of the universe, which are fine and abundant, and will always give the appreciative rest. The man who is well set against the best side of the world, which is ever a region of peace and a paradise of joys,

has found a realm of high repose. Need I name such obvious attractions and solaces as beauty, sunshine, the spirit of the woods, the grandeur of mountains, the morning and evening and midnight, love that pervades like a sweeter air, virtue, poetry, piety; and, above all, God, who touches all things with his infinite rest but to stay their chaos and draw them into serenity? To what calmness and satisfaction does not the soul of things invite! Nature is serene, and our chafed and jaded citizens find life set to a more composed air and energy by frequent contact with her spirit: in no haste herself, she checks the flurry and fury of our habits and insures a lofty calmness. She administers sedatives to body and soul. There is an absence of flurry even from her motion and velocity. The eagle is said to escape atmospheric tumult by rising into an upper calm that is always accessible; so there are blest Arcadian retreats in all climates and countries for the people who will seek them, — as Dante said, in his exile, "Shall I not speculate on most delightful truths under whatever sky I may be?" I know of no content so sufficient as that of unity with Providence, as if here the aspiring heart broke into its full bloom, and peace had secured all needed guaranties.

Who shall measure man's privilege in this respect? It is a system of benefits in which he is set. We name one charm, and there are ten thousand waiting to be named, and as good as the best. The streets are paved with diamonds. Rubies hang on the grass every morning, or the diamond-fields are moved to our very doors and all may see them who have good eyes. The air is vital with aromas, and music is wafted on every breeze. Every summer is Paradise, as every open and sweet soul well knows; and winter, after all the hard names we please to give it, has its spectacles to please and inspire. Every hill and mountain is a Parnassus, where the Muses sit in state, and wait to touch with their magic wands all who come in love. The day is deep and full, and the hours are angels. What a flowing tide of life sets in upon us from the past and the present, as if we were each the focal point toward which genius has shot its light and power! All things are ours, — the poems of the ages, the stars in the sky, and the Spirit that is before and after and over all. The universe is a gift hurled into our arms to own and cherish. Immortality spans our life like the perfect dome of day and night, and our way lies through starry arches.

Give us a sense of what belongs to our lot, and Crœsus will seem poor and royalty a beggar's privilege. Bring us back from our petty plights and foolish games of blown bladders, to which degenerate times have lured us, and install us in full possession of our estates, and how can we be other than grateful and content day by day?

But the perfect climax of this felicity is to sustain relations to the good in things evil. Wisdom has been rightly called the art of finding compensations, or of seeing what is always left when this or that is withdrawn. Wisdom is recognizing, with perpetual complacency, that the bad is good, that the worst is often the best, and that never is there a pound taken out on one side but there is a pound put in on some other, — as Thomas Fuller wrote, to suggest some comfort to his countrymen in their half-sighted griefs: "When the sea grows shallow on the shores of Holland and Zealand, the channel waxeth deeper on the coasts of Kent and Essex."

Give me my possible refuge in the good, and the evil is instantly reduced to the shadow of my fine citadel. If I am not asked to the party, why need I lose the evening? I may have a good time with my books, an earlier bed, better

sleep, and less headache to-morrow morning. If the winter is stern and deals hardly by our flowers and fingers, does it not much more than balance the account by fertilizing our wits? for, to quote Mrs. Barbauld, —

"Souls are ripened in our northern sky."

If you missed a city culture, you gained a good and wide adhesion to Nature, and grew like a hardy child at her breast, which must be regarded as the prime blessing of life; and you may go to town with the best preparation for its business and offices and honors, and will often hear it said by the observing that city wit is mostly country born and bred. If we are plain-looking, which in this age of disregarded laws of body and spirit is more than possible, we escape, like those who have outgrown their youthful bloom, the peril of vanity, and shall have our emphasis placed on better things, as Du Guesclin said, "Since I am so ugly, it behooves that I be bold;" or as Pope said, "If my person be crooked," — he was a hunchback, — "my verses shall be straight." Defect serves as a spur; or, rather, Nature will equal herself by opening some other stop in her organ for the one that is closed. When was not the loss of

cakes and confections the gain of the stomach? When Sydney Smith went to dine with a brother clergyman, and a woman who had just come into the kitchen to serve for the occasion threw the soup out of the back door, thinking it was dirty water, — the good divine set all content and at ease by his broad and bland philosophy, saying, "The loss of the soup is the gain of our stomachs and wits." Horace gratefully mentions that poverty drove him to poetry, and poetry, besides being an inner well of flowing wines, had introduced him to Varus, Virgil, and Mæcenas; and, we may add, to all the scholars of the ages. Diogenes, one of the odd and wise ones of Greece, of whom Alexander said, "If I were not Alexander I would be Diogenes," — he, of an exile, became a philosopher. The world must thank a cruel persecution and old Bedford jail for Bunyan's Pilgrim and his heroic trip. Are the times revolutionary? Then vast seas of stagnation will be broken up; for War's ugly front has always a better rear, as sunlight bursts in after the storm. The severe epochs of the past have been those in which the best seeds have been planted and fostered; art and poetry have been rock flowers, and grew in wild conditions;

whilst religion has been tested and refined through martyrdom.

There is no more pleasing piece of autobiography in literature than that in which Montaigne sums up the benefits of his bad memory; and, since most of us are blessed with the same trouble, it may be well to know how to regard it. For this end, nothing can better serve than a paragraph from the outspoken and sensible Frenchman: "Nature has furnished me in my other faculties proportionably as she has unfurnished me in this: I should otherwise have been apt implicitly to have reposed my wit and judgment upon the bare report of other men, without ever setting them to work upon any inquisition whatever, had the strange inventions and opinions of the authors I have read been ever present with me by the benefit of memory. Also, by this means I am not so talkative, for the magazine of the memory is ever better furnished with matter than that of the invention; and, had mine been faithful to me, I had ere this deafed all my friends with my eternal babble . . . Another obligation I have to this infirm memory of mine is, that by this means I less remember the injuries I have received; insomuch that (as the ancient said) I should have a protocol,

a register of injuries, or a prompter, like Darius, who, that he might not forget the offence he had received from those of Athens, so oft as he sat down to dinner ordered one of his pages three times to whoop in his ear, 'Sir, remember the Athenians;' and also the places which I revisit, and the books I read over again, still smile upon me with a fresh novelty. And it is not without good reason said, that he who has not a good memory should never take upon him the trade of lying."

The universe is equitable, the world is balanced to a nicety, and every man should see that he cannot fail to get his due. No man fares worse or better than he ought. A true equation is sure; or the scales are perfect, and, in the long run, never tip the wrong way. You and I have no just complaint to file against Fortune, which has always dealt with us with the last degree of fairness. If we have failed, then we have slighted some law that is still friendly in its rigor; have trusted to luck; have tied our ends with a rope of sand; have mixed our glue without the sticking property; have made our own conditions instead of accepting those of the universe, and success on our terms would have been a return to chaos, or

the letting loose of chained panthers from whose ravages we should at length beg deliverance. Every secret shall be laid open; every flaw in our chain is counted; every fit stone shall be set in the temple; no gold will be lost out of the perfect sieve; and every deed, good and bad, will come to its reward, because it is itself the seed of its own harvest, and the connection is vital and never broken. Every act pays itself in its own coin, which does but reveal the intimacy of Providence in all affairs. The universe is no game of chances, but the unity and sequences are perfect. Life is hedged in and guarded by law which has more than Saxon strictness; and no one's tether is too long or too short. It is not our business to complain, but to obey; and in obedience we shall surprise and capture the secret of contentment.

VI.

COURAGE.

"A valiant man
Ought not to undergo or tempt a danger,
But worthily, and by selected ways.
He undertakes by reason, not by chance:
His valor is the salt to his virtues,
They're all unseasoned without it."

BEN JONSON.

"The strength of man sinks in the hour of trial;
But there doth live a power that to the battle
Girdeth the weak."

JOANNA BAILLIE.

"Shall we not heed the lesson taught of old,
And by the Present's lips repeated still, —
In our own single manhood to be bold,
Fortressed in conscience and impregnable will?"

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

LIKE all human qualities courage has many phases and degrees; begins low and mounts high. There is a courage that is not courage, which is clearly the lowest round of this ascending ladder: it is mere vanity and puerile and ridiculous affectation. Falstaff was bloated with this out-of-danger bravery; and any satirist can find it in abundance in any company of fifty

persons. In our parlors we are all heroes, I make no doubt, and care not a feather for ghosts or hobgoblins, but to make a mock of them, as we sit before finely blazing fires, and have around us willing ears to listen as we chant so coolly our brave cantos; but how would it be if we were caught alone in a moonless night, or in some wild jungle? We have all heard how the mice in their holes speak in jest of cats, and this trait seems to have ascended into better ranks.

A holiday valor can boast a high origin. Patroclus was wont to put on Achilles's armor, and mount his war-horse, and swell with bold conceits before the gaping crowd. But when the grim war-god summoned to battle, Patroclus quickly slipped out of the great hero's armor and off his horse, and was no braver than some others. It was largely stage-play and fireworks for the imagination. And not otherwise was it with the Jew, whose mock valor is so graphically sketched in the Spanish "Chronicle of the Cid," — a book worthy of the Spain of a better day. "The body of the Cid, at his death, looking so firm and comely that it seemed as if it were yet alive, was seated in noble knightly attire in an ivory chair in the monastery of San Pedro de

Cardeña, with his sword Tizona in his left hand, where it remained ten years. Meanwhile, a Jew, finding himself alone in the monastery, began to say, 'This is the body of that Cid whom they say no man in the world ever dared to take by the beard. I will take him by the beard now.' And he put forth his hand to pull the beard of the Cid; but before his hand could reach it, God, who would not suffer this thing to be done, sent the Cid's spirit into the body, and the Cid let the strings of his mantle go from his right hand, and laid hand on his sword Tizona, and drew it a full palm's length out of the scabbard. And when the Jew saw this, he fell upon his back for fear, and began to cry out so loudly that all they who were without the church heard him."

The world is full of heroes before dead Cids, who are cowardly enough before living ones; which is proof of its poverty in the true riches of courage. It reckons without its host; or the coward is always in mask, tricking out his faint heart with the vanity of brave-looking cockades and laying many high colors over his white blood. You shall never count on a boaster in any sphere. Let us beware of the fool of promises. Real power is content to know itself, and

pluck discards a bell. When two artists came before the Athenians to offer themselves to superintend the erection of some public building, one spent a half day in boasting of his capacities; and the other quietly stepped forward at the conclusion of these empty superlatives, and said, "What this man promises I will do." We need not add to whom the Athenians gave the job.

A trifle above this there is a courage that is only a choice between fears. It is a forced solution of an ugly problem, and looks well if we are not in the secret of its painful constraint. It would not, dare not, but *must*. It is simply making a virtue of an unwelcome necessity and electing its risk, — whether to do or die; whether to burn or drown, as with ill-fated passengers; or, if one be a bashful young man, whether to endure the pain or speak to the young lady who is standing plump on his corns; whether to face the perils of camp and field in war time or the derisions of the neighborhood and Christabel for staying at home; or, if it be a timid young lady, whether to go into the church or deny the minister, to do either of which she has about an equal dread; or, if it be almost any one of us, whether to tell a costly truth or tell a lie. It is a force-

put bravery, or the pressing of fear to an issue. "Whomsoever I shall find," said the Grecian Hector, "crouching far away from the battle, it shall not be possible for him to escape the dogs;" and so the greater fear drove to the less, and the most white-livered dared to fight, or did not dare not to. When the question is courage or court-martial, the soldier, if a coward, will be likely to choose the first; that is, he will venture rather than be disgraced; which is to say, he has like all cowards more vanity than any other quality. This bravery is a low prudence and always a last resort; and we have it in the stag at bay, and in any one of us making a reluctant choice between two terrors. That is, there is no proper or positive valor here whatever.

Another of these lower rounds is a secondary or following courage. "You first, and then I will," is language the world over, and familiar as the sky. If there is ice to be broken, somebody else must break it; and it is noticeable there is sometimes a refusing to follow when the ice is broken. It is a courage that likes a safe distance from danger, and the best of chances to beat a retreat. In social relations this courage wants curiosity conquered and got out of the way, a trial

made to test the acceptableness of whatever is proposed, and time and opportunity given for inward rallying and getting its horses fully in hand, and then it may or may not venture. It has no self-sufficing and leading-off quality. It is always in the rear, and makes lawyers who are afraid to stir without precedents, and who turn the court into a plea of echoes; editors and politicians who are nobody till they have heard from the party leaders and studied the platform; doctors who are nothing till they have got it from the regular faculty whether to blister or bleed, physic or vomit, stuff or starve; and ministers, wary of making points as elephants of crossing bridges, till they have heard from the synods, councils, and pews. It waits on security, courts allowance, and never invites itself, nor is there of its own accord and in advance of assured immunity. It is servile, having the instinct of a flock of sheep.

How few are the devotees of fashion bold enough to be in the front rank! They will be a trifle late, and first suffer the public eye to lose a sense of the ridiculous in the customary. New York is a year behind Paris, and the rest of the country a year or two behind New York: anything by degrees and a little late, however inele-

gant, absurd, and harmful, — paper shoes or cowhide, hats from a vanishing point to an amplitude to crown any giantess of fable, narrow skirts or huge bastions. We know not what outrages of good taste might be imposed on our wives and daughters, give time for drilling adepts and making gradual approaches. We expect anything. And even the lords of creation are not always lordly and beforehand with themselves and their opportunities. Here are young men challenging each other to spend the evening with Bacchus in Old Griper's cellar, but make no headway as they walk a dozen times up and down the street. Not one of them has a positive character. They were all born to be led. But young Spartacus, who is by inheritance a pioneer, comes along, and they have a leader; and now all goes well, or ill. There are many sheep among us, but few lions, — a Joshua, Leonidas, Luther, a Boadicea, Genevieve, or Joan of Arc, only once in a century.

Another grade of this attribute is a rough, stout, animal valor. Byron said he "liked something craggy to break his mind on;" and these born bruisers can only feel themselves in ventures and perils and the motions of prowess. They like the desperate, and make a toy of risks.

The delight of the animal sort is to feel their hair rise and their blood creep, as dogs and cats and cocks find their pastime in fighting. There are the groundlings, the men of the prize-ring, — the Tom Hyer and Heenan class, — who begin to feel good when well-nigh pounded to a jelly, and venture to the brink of a horrid death. There are born lion-hunters, whalers, dalliers with arctic icebergs, peerers into volcanic craters, the forlorn-hope heroes, Putnams to drag out the wolves just for fun, Sam Patches for idiotic plunging, Blondins for bold and absurd balancing, buccaneers and banditti, freebooters and filibusters. But these are not to be entirely counted out as useless; for they are the subduers of jungles and tamers of dragons, which gentlemen in broadcloth and clean shirt-bosoms would never have attacked. If Nature has an Augean stable to cleanse, she makes that a Hercules shall be born, as she sent fire and fury to jointly work up the first stages of the world. Pioneers that are more tigers than the tigers, and that out-catamount the catamounts, belong to the system, and make way for the women of both sexes, and a milder and higher civilization. The grandsons of fire-eaters are mostly graceful and serviceable men enough, since the divine

method is one of melioration, of the sod climbing to a soul in leaf and flower, and of brawn flowing into brain. But how to stop this refining tendency at length is a serious matter; for Nature seems to launch it and withdraw her hands, as shipbuilders launch ships and leave their fate to pilots. How to retain some drops of aboriginal blood becomes in due time a grave problem, — how to keep our eagles from hatching chickens. One can hardly believe, as he sees nice people in slippers and loose gowns, and watching for a cloud, and keeping their eye on the thermometer, and fumbling for their daily pulse, and consulting doctors, and chewing pills, and full of sighs and misgivings, that they are all that is left of the old Round Table Knights, of ancient Hengist and Horsa, Alfred and Ethelred, of Spanish Cid, of Saracen, Huguenot, and Puritan!

But we will not make too much of our anxieties in this direction; for the more the world is subdued, and all the rough ways are opened and occupied, and fate is manageable on easier terms, the less need is there of a coarse animal valor; and subsidence of a rude pluck may be in the perfect plan, like the cooling of the earth and the disappearance of mastodons. We find Dry-

den long ago suggesting that this type of courage is a "virtue to be seldom exercised."

However, the flesh is to be looked after with much concern whilst we are mortal. We cannot spare a single span from the column of life as Nature has cast it; but must have the bottom if we would have the top. All the heroisms, to the last and finest degree, are somehow mounted on the body. The whole man is tied to his stomach. No man who is sick or frail can be so brave in anything, not in his art ideals, or prayers, or dreams, as if he were well and robust, and carried quantities of arterial blood; for there is such a unity and wholeness to life, such a firm hooping and holding together of the entire system, such alliance and sympathy of the parts, that not even genius is emancipated and has its full liberty. Health is essential to make us equal to ourselves at any point of our ascending life, as there must be a perfect condition of the earth to exhale a perfect atmosphere, and supply fine sunrises and sunsets. Resolution derives from the muscles, and power is as the pulse. Even prayer has a carnal tinge, and reveals how the night or the day has gone with us, reports of our supper or dinner by its levity or gravity. The minister knows the high-livers of his congregation by the length of

their nap in church. Whoever reads Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" with an open sense to all its sources can detect where the opium came in and where it went out, as some of Byron's stanzas and not others are said to "smell of gin." The low pulse of old age tells on the spirit; and you need not look far to find some advancing and innovating manhood, some hero of reforms, on the eve of taking a lower tone with the flight of years, and pulling down his sails and setting his compass for some quieter haven. An old man observed to Agis that "all things here at Sparta are turned topsy-turvy." "If it is so," responded Agis, "it is agreeable to reason; for, when I was a boy, I heard my father say that all things were then topsy-turvy, and he heard his father say the same." Those statesmen whose blood is water are always on board a glass ship-of-state, and just approaching within sight and hearing of the rapids; and every stump-speaker indulges largely in the oratory of despair, if not from faith, then for effect, as touching a string that is sure to vibrate in the hearts of many voters.

Heroes have mostly good constitutions and fine digestion, and great reliance on their bodies. Everybody knows what a coward he is when he wakes in the small hours of the night; how he

misgives and thinks he is equal to nothing, and that to-day will be doomsday. The red tide is sluggish, the sensibilities are benumbed, and therefore the world has an ugly look since we are not weaponed to meet it. The clergyman thought when he went to bed he had a sermon; but he sees at five o'clock on Sunday morning he has none. The orator wonders where is the brilliant oration he finished last evening. The merchant, as he wakes and looks out at the stars, sees the hopeful risk as hopeless. I find timid people think that a heavy rain, beginning at midnight, is likely to be another flood, and pray for a chance in a second ark. At low twelve the air is full of birds of ill omen that nobody sees at high twelve. The doctors live on the cowardly fears of people who are not sick, but are not well, as wanting the usual force of the vital circulations. So ill-health scatters all our brave ideas and aims, and leaves us puny and anxious.

My body may not be myself; but I find we are fated to keep up a clog-dance. We feel each other as the Siamese twins might. I am weary all over at the same time, and sick through and through. If my flesh is jaded, my spirits lag; or the exceptions to this are so rare that the rule is proven. When the minister gets dyspeptic,

the people wonder what has become of his brave ideas and cheering hopes; and green tea shows itself to be green tea in his sermon.. A low diet, or a vicious diet, tells on the last limits of thought. "My friend," says Sydney Smith, "sups late; he eats some strong soup, then a lobster, then some tart, and he dilutes these esculent varieties with wine. The next morning I call upon him. He is going to sell his house in London, and retire into the country. He is alarmed for his eldest daughter's health. His expenses are hourly increasing, and nothing but a timely retreat can save him from ruin. All this is the lobster; and when over-excited nature has had time to manage the testaceous incumbrance, the daughter recovers, the finances are in good condition, and every rural idea is effectually exploded."

It may be humiliating to solve the problem of courage thus, with so much of a downward reference. It looks like paying too much toll to the senses. Immortals and gods are we, and yet hamstrung, or chained like galley slaves to these mortal drags! But, whilst we are cooped in the flesh, it is wise to honor our conditions, and parry fate by going willingly and bravely along with it, and making a liberty of necessity,

— as every farmer gracefully plants what the soil bids, wheat or white beans, and finds his reward in seconding and not in contradicting the lower dictations. It becomes us to sacrifice freely to the ruddy goddess, her gifts are so many and fine and indispensable, — as the good cheer of the eye, the major key of the voice, a step that charms like a dance, a vision that spreads gay colors on all things, a sky always clear with the wind west by north-west, endurance, insight, vitality, vim, and, withal, large volumes of courage to carry us wherever we desire. Health cannot be left out of our aims. The engineer cannot spare his coals and oil and perfect condition of all the gearing; and every one has an equal need of a sound body. We must not be pimps and nurslings if we would dare and do. In short, would you know at what price health is still a bargain? When you have paid for it everything but honor and immortality, — all your pet indulgences, brandy, hashish, snuff, green tea; late suppers and soft beds and delicious idleness; Schnapps and Plantation Bitters and soothing syrups; broad margins of profits from your daily business; and those more positive values, a protecting purpose in life to confer self-respect and dignity and

shield from *ennui*, steady habits, good hours, plain diet, ample ventilation and frequent baths, and a conscience void of offence.

But let us rise out of a carnal atmosphere and see our subject on some higher levels. Broadly stated, courage is a birth from competency, and cowardice from incompetency, real or fancied; and that which the flesh supplies, save to the lower orders of heroisms, is but a fraction of what is needed. It is mainly a question of higher equalities to the demands. Courage is as the features of the mind. What are we equal to? That will decide what we are brave in; for we are brave according as we have faiths, virtues, disciplines, skills, habits, the artillery of mind and soul to fall back on and rally to our service, as the duck who knows his web feet has no fear of the water, nor the bird of the upper air when he has once found his wings. Heroism is a matter of sufficiency. See how bold the skilled artisan is about all affairs of his trade! and how independently the humble gardener in shirt-sleeves, who knows all about the planting and pruning and potting of flowers, confronts the rich landlord in broadcloth who knows nothing! His knowledge is a throne, and makes him a bold dictator to ignorance. But in the parlor

the scales would turn the other way, since skill would be reversed. Supply all the conditions of safety, and a man need have no more fear of a wild lion than of a wild gazelle. Paul Morphy was cool because he knew his game and had easy mastery of it; but the chess-players thought he had no nerves. That ingenious spinner, Arachne, challenged Minerva, the goddess of household employments, to a contest at the loom, saying, "I am not afraid of the goddess: let her try her skill with me if she dare venture." "When I was in London," said Rothschild, "the East India Company had £800,000 of gold to sell. I went to the sale and bought it all. But I knew the Duke of Wellington must have it; for I had bought a great many of his bills at discount." The great banker had no fears, because he had adequate facts. With these in hand, it was not a case for alarm and lying awake, any more than for the farmer to put in an extra ton of hay in the summer, when he knows his neighbor's cattle must have it in the spring; or for Johnny to buy a ten-cent whistle on trust when he holds the secret that Tommy has fifteen cents burning in his pocket to pay for it. Make all the steps clear and certain of ingress and egress, as they were to Æneas, according to Virgil, and you

may venture a trip into Hades without a single throb of the heart. A sure footing and holding of the keys when the grim gate is past is enough to keep one's spirits up.

The story of Scheherezade, the fictitious empress of tale-tellers, whose world-renowned feats in this direction are the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments," is a poetic contribution to our thought that courage is of qualification. The Sultan of the Indies, for some barbarous freak, had resolved to espouse a new Sultana every evening, and have her strangled in the morning. His vizier was solemnly ordered to attend to this daily marriage and murder, with strict attention to every particular of manner and time. But how about the fair daughters of the first families, who each looked for her turn to be dragged to the sanguinary nuptials? They were seized and crazed with fear and consternation, — all save one, Scheherezade, the daughter of the vizier himself; and she, to the horror of her father and astonishment of all, insisted on becoming the bride of this monstrous bridegroom; and, after every dissuasion by all who loved her had proved in vain, the vizier, in the agony of despair, led her to the evening altar as if it were her morning bier. But she knew her

secret, confided in it, and had no fears. For a thousand and one mornings she had the Sultan so absorbed in some entrancing story that she contrived to have but half told as the fatal hour arrived, that he had her spared to conclude it in the evening. And thus she charmed him with her tissues of fancy, which we still read with spell-bound interest, into an affectionate husband, — a method of carrying a point with the lords of creation that others than a Sultana might safely put on trial. But let us not miss the point of the narrative. The shrewd maiden knew her equality to the case, and courage was not unnatural even in what was deemed so perilous an undertaking.

> "After one completely draws
> All the lion's teeth and claws,
> Who need fear his helpless paws,
> Or his boneless, mumbling jaws?"

Common life is full of brave qualifications and competences. We venture on our talents and attainments since we find our freedom and easy success in them. Abating what we must for some shy taints of blood, as if we were inheritors from foxes and hares, and some moments of panic to which all are liable, since there are terrors too sudden to be parried, it is then a

question of backers and ample supports whether we dare or dare not. The key to heroism is adequacy. Benumb any sense, as the eye or ear, and there follows embarrassment, because loss of needed power. We pay a heavy tax on a club-foot, or squint eye, a dwarfed or overgrown stature, or cream-colored hair, because with the ill-bred and gaping world these set us at a disadvantage too great for any, save one in many thousands, to meet and overcome. I know a woman of fine mind and spirit who, having always lived in the country, is haunted by some whim about awkwardness, that holds her from venturing to visit the city; and desire often turns pale, and withdraws at the thought of contending, with ill outfit, against adverse and trying situations. Who can stand serene and aplomb in company with a ragged or misfitting coat, or a dress or hat suggestive of Noah's flood? The superhuman and the super-eccentric may be equal to this, and have no blush or flurry; but the rest of us have a debt to the lower felicities, and are called to guard against the most external defects and disadvantages if we would go bravely on.

But inward abilities are yet better, since they favor a deeper sense of safety. A central

mastery enchants and emboldens, like a higher health, and has a certain modest eagerness to put in its appearance. Greatness is entitled to exhibition, and is naturally moved by its own forces to enter the lists and come to trial, as light is under a law of radiation, and the "bushel" is an artificial restriction or stay upon Nature. From the child's fearless walk when it has found its feet, and the school boy's and girl's bold recitation when they have a sure lesson, to the Congressman's heroic speech when he has drunk deep at the fountain of civil philosophy and political history, — all generous outfit tells on the nerves and the heart and the will. We disperse timidities as we make conquest of aptitudes, as superstition flies before reason and science. Our fears accuse the perfection of our states, and so far our honor as our short-coming is of neglect. The secret is to mount our terrors by superiority; to fight fear with power, wisdom, skill, experience, as we conquer fate by more fate or higher.

There are many witnesses to our sense of the close relation of competency and courage; and a somewhat notable one is the profusion of our apologies and modest disclaimers. It is an inundation of these cheap and too often cowardly

expedients. They come as easy and thick as snow-flakes. And what is their philosophy but to depress standards and bring expectations within easy reach of our capacity, and so get the better of our trepidations, as the boys bring the marks nearer to insure a perfect reliance on their store of powder? We would set expectation to a lower range, have the count on us reduced, pitch the tune to an easier key, and so mount ourselves on certainties and have no fears. What inevitable apologists are our orators with their "premeditated impromptus," so that we almost look to see these men, who "did not come to speak, but to hear," draw their speeches from their pockets and coolly proceed to read them. It is coaxing bravery by making victory more easy. Of course, every singer is unfortunate and out of voice just now, caught cold in the last shower, is not yet over an influenza, is out of practice, and only knows a snatch of this or that old song. With a few this may spring of vanity, may be a blinding the more to dazzle, as for stage effect they turn off the lights and then let them on, or as wives play on their husbands by promising a few old crusts for dinner, and finally bring on a roast turkey and plum-pudding. But mainly these disparagements

betray modesty, and are in the interest of courage, or, what is the same thing, a sense of easy equality to the case. Everybody knows how housekeepers are for ever rallying themselves thus by apologies; how they will have us in all the secrets of the cook-room before we come to the table, — that the stove refused to bake, the chimney to-day drew down instead of up, the last barrel of flour was the worst that ever came into the house, and that Bridget forgot to sweeten the sweet-cake, or has mixed the tea and coffee in the same pot and made a mess of it, and that a thousand and one mishaps have befallen, which never occurred at any other time; and all this to adjust the ideal to an easy compass, and have their nerves set to an assured composure. It is a roundabout way of bracing diffidence, or closing a bargain with valor.

But apologies are not much in order. If they are set up to parry an exacting public, to disarm a severe criticism, to keep our fastidious friends in countenance, a little healthy contempt would serve a deal better. If they are compromises with shiftlessness and short-coming, contrivances to eke out a deficit that idleness ever incurs, and save the labor of outfit and mastery, a few sharp spurs set into the ribs of our ambition and in-

dustry would be wiser. If they are needed, then they are needless, as holding a secret that will publish itself in due time. And if they uncover what would else keep itself covered and foolishly trumpet defects, then they are the folly of fools. Whilst, by the sure play of Nature's law of like from like, they educate fear and keep up habits of temerity, as dosing every little ailment reduces the tone of health and drags to the grave there is an effort to shun. One likes to meet a courage that can let apologies pass. Heroes die without a groan. The brave will see an army of ghosts, and have never a word to say about it. Even sciatica and toothache and colic have been known to be silent. And, moreover, let us presume, as we well may, that all sympathy for defects worth having need not be bid for, but will have the grace to volunteer itself. Let us have unsolicited pity or none. All in all, I suppose I could offer no better advice than to urge the purchase of padlocks for our apologetic lips at the next corner.

But modesty, a low tone, absence of promises, a plain and simple habit, and somewhat retiring ways, are to be commended as befriending courage; since they naturally favor the high advantage of ample basis. The English lords, very

wisely one would say, wear common cloth, and hug the ordinary topics of conversation, — the markets, the weather, the crops, the newspaper gossip, and like petty and idle topics, — since their lordships thus keep their promise below their capacity and easy performance, and have a ready courage. The philosopher likes to be found in his kitchen, as the modest orator speaks better from a low stand; the great general is more free and easy with his epaulettes off; the saint avoids a brassy trumpet; and all sensible people hold themselves under a little reserve. It is an insurance against anxieties and fears to have thus made sure of competency.

The antidote of fear is power; and of this, I make no doubt, we hold more already than we are apt to think; that is, we are liable to be the dupes of distrust and the cowards of mere whim. We do not count enough on our sleeping energies; but are like those people who always move us to laughter, who set to hunting for their spectacles when they already have them on. The *can't* is often only in the thought; while the *can* is in all parts of our being, but cheated of its credit and service. There are energies in a drop of dew, set them in the active form of steam, to lift tons and rive ledges of

granite; and this may be a hint, not improperly taken, of the latencies of the soul. Socrates thought men were gods who had not found it out. What a power is the human eye, any eye of a thousand, when securely braced! the ugliest bull-dog slinks before it; no lion can withstand it; in Mirabeau and Napoleon it could tame a mob and check a riot.

Saadi said, "There is under every jacket a man." Burns thought there were many poets behind ploughs and in ale-houses. That we see greatness so often uncovered by mere accident, as it were, leads us to regard it as not uncommon; and to believe there are many who have all the qualifications of courage, but have not courage as not having knowledge of themselves. A little custom serves for self-revelation. Where there is capacity, fear flies with a *début;* and we come to a second trial, and a third, with more composed nerves and a happier success. The lesson that is perpetually taught by a successful republic is one of trust in the people, in the prevalence of mother-wit and divining instincts, which are much safer guides than merely acquired lore. One need not be surprised that the late Emperor of France found an empress in a very humble walk, who, after a little of

trial to get herself in hand, found a beautiful ease in the gayest court-circle of all Europe; and there are more Eugénies in the street. There are brave sailors and soldiers by scores in every town, give them fifty voyages and a hundred battles; for what with the emergence of self and the discovery that the risks are chiefly imaginary, — it costing the enemy, as every soldier learns, a man's weight in ounce bullets to effect a successful shot, — their nerves are set to a sure composure. Every one becomes braver by habit and use; or custom checks the wild strokes of the heart and tames the shyness of the eye. The most select company is no terror to those who have often been in it; and almost any one of us has the needed gifts, and only lacks the best degrees of use. "Lycurgus, the old lawgiver, forbade the Lacedemonians to fight often with the same nations, lest the enemy should overcome fear by custom." He saw them all as heroes in the measure of their adequacy, but not by experience, which secret he meant to withhold.

The lion in us is also at the command of the will, which is a rallying wand of such magic power that the transition it brings from cowardice to courage is often the work of an instant;

and, the will slipping its hold, we go down as swift as we came up. Thus every one knows how young ladies in reading-clubs often go on bravely with four stanzas of the five, or nine of the ten, which they are to attempt, and ridiculously fail on the closing lines. It is not uncommon with us to fight bravely with danger hand to hand, and to faint when the peril is over. I have known a country boy spend the evening at the village, a mile and a half from his farm-house home, and return bravely alone, with no moon or star to keep him company. By applying the force-pump of his will, he drew on a torrent of heroic spirit that would have sufficed to carry him into Brazilian jungles. He braced to a firm step, and heard his foot every time it struck on the beaten road. Without a flurry he quitted the last glimmer of the village lights, and cared not that the candles were out at the two or three homes he had to pass on his lonely way. He tramped heavily by the deep dark ravine on the right that led off into wide forests; skirted the long reach of woods on the left with no abatement of valor; glided boldly by orchard and field, and on through the blackness of darkness to the door-yard maple, whose noon shadow slanted quite to the door he was to enter. What

a hero of will! But look again: instantly our brave has become a coward, has surrendered his will and fallen into the hands of his fancies, has lifted the gate of his heart and let off the valorous flood, and makes the last twenty paces with a press of palpitations as if he were nobody. And so it is the will, or the want of will, which makes of us heroes or cowards. Our latent life lies at the mercy of volition. We are like those toys that must have a spring touched to bring out some hidden image; or like sleeping giants that must be awaked by some incantation to be themselves; that is, we hold a better nature in reserve which is at the disposal of high resolves.

The fibre and fearlessness of Andrew Jackson were revealed in that eloquent purpose of his will, — "By the Eternal!" And any nature that shares this strong rudder pushes direct on the line of its choice into whatever tempestuous sea lies that way. Who is a man, in any high sense, but he that can brace himself with voluntary firmness against opposition and peril? He that will run is nobody, or is what most of us are. Even doggedness is respectable, if not agreeable; and obstinacy, to the degree of dying for nothing, as whether a feather was

white or whitish, or a pin had a solid or adjusted head, or the orator said tweedle-dum or tweedle-dee, is a better failing than a timid servility. At all events, this vice is free of fear and no craven.

Courage, moreover, is a prominent element in all the affections of our nature. Our fascinations render us unfearing, because they are positive, and because they magnify the ends to be gained out of all proportion to possible losses. As the word itself signifies, courage is *cor-ago*, or what we may term heart-motion; and it characterizes all the inward states of choice, preference, appetence, ambition, cupidity, and lust; is in all love, friendship, philanthropy; comes with all high devotion to art, science, country, morality, and God. We are heroes according to the measure of our various affections for objects and ends, and are quite capable of becoming martyrs for mere toys by concentration of heart on them, as it is said that South-Sea Islanders will leap into waters peopled with hungry sharks to rescue an idolized palm-leaf hat. What adventurers for the love of gold! And how well that it is so, since the shining lure leads on the race to many new conquests, near and far, on land and in the sea. According to Schiller's poem, the old king cast a golden

goblet into the raging Charybdis, which should be his that would venture in and bring it from those wild and mysterious depths. Instantly a slender youth made the fearful plunge! What a symbol of the guerdons that the world offers, — coals in mines, whales in the oceans, gold and silver in wild Californias and Australias, news to bring from central Africa and the arctic regions, —and of the ready courage that is supplied to the venture! The ugly enemies — climate, fevers, explosions, ferocious beasts, savages, and cannibals — are not suffered to hinder. Sancho Panza, poltroon as he was, enlisted as the Don's squire, under promise of islands to govern; and perpetually needed the lure to coax him on from peril to peril. There is a price that buys off all fear. There are El Dorados to command every degree of courage: with this one, it is a handful of confections; with that, a cockade of fame; and with another, a bag of gold. Cupidity is sure to carry us against all terrors.

How heroic is the doting binary passion which we call love! Cupid is painted as blind, or with bandaged eyes, to signify not that he is careless and foolish in choosing, but that he will see nothing that may cause him to misgive and turn

back. He is bent on advance and conquest despite all risks, which he would not notice or would regard as nothing. To watch the bold play of this heroic passion is the height of all charms, except it be to feel it; and hence much of our literature, surely the best and most read portion of it, turns on this point. No other interest has been treated with the same amplitude; neither has it with the same poetic fire and fidelity, since every author has been, at least once, the hero he describes. He dips his pen into a central ink-pot, and writes not on hearsay, but as "one having authority." The ancient classic of Leander and Hero has many a modern counterpart. That enamoured youth swum the Hellespont nightly between Abydos and Sestus, a swift tide of four miles, to spend an hour — and possibly more — with the fair priestess of Venus, who, kind spirit, set a torch on shore to mark for him a safe landing. The deed was long deemed impossible, — by such, I suppose, as had never felt Leander's rapt and brave impulse. But Lord Byron thought better of it; and on a second attempt, attended by daylight and friends in a boat, swum the passage. But like feats are not uncommon through this unfearing power of the heart. In the mythol-

ogy of the gods and heroes, there are ever appearing, in wild play, like strong lights on a picture, the daring romances of love. The curious in such matters may read at their leisure the stories of Apollo and Daphne, Venus and Adonis, Sappho and Phaon, Atalanta and her suitors, and Helena and her bold adorers.

The annals of knighthood reveal similar heroic inspirations from a kindred source. It was largely the daring of love in tournaments, and not less in many single encounters between lance and lance. Often it was a purely insane venture of sentimentalism, of no credit to either party, — a great daring and ado about nothing; which led Cervantes, in his famous satire, to confer on the ridiculous Don a not less ridiculous Dulcinea del Toboso, for whose gratification and astonishment he attacked wind-mills, water-falls, flocks of sheep, and funeral processions, with equal valor and folly. But, giving satire its widest margin, there was still a truer regard for woman in chivalry than the world had known to that day, and a foretokening, in those wild courages of sentiment, of the bravery of a higher and better love. It is only another step to Enoch Arden and Evangeline. It is only a refinement on King Arthur and his gal-

lants that the modern Christian muse can set forth of love's adventures. And one sometimes has a half fear that myth and legend, with their high exaggerations, cannot be spared; that our modern amours, save among the lowest classes, need heating and bracing thus; that the heroic measure of love is no more to be found as of old on the highest plains of society, but a bloodless, timid, calculating, arithmetical affection instead, that wants in advance a count of silver spoons and gold dishes, an inventory of estates, and a reading of the old man's will. Love seems not as once to be sufficient unto itself, to be a whole world of its own, and full of sunset colors and romantic splendors. It has grown somewhat of a *cent-per-cent* affair, and gives an undue emphasis to tax-lists. Is this man a fortune, and this woman an heiress? Then it will do to fall in love. Cupid has become a sharp-eyed fellow, and in finding eyes has lost his valors. But have him blind once more, with Cupid's all-seeing and all-biassed blindness, and he will be brave as ever, as we see among peasants and in our best novels. Love's true name is Hero and not Flummux; and our young people, who misgive at the thought of tailor's and milliner's and merchant's and butcher's

bills, have not been baptized into his name and spirit. Galen would recommend iodine to their need; would breed in them more of the red tide of true passion, which fears not fire nor flood, nor humble cottages to begin life in, nor what hard work it may require to tug the boat forward into deep water and fair sailing.

In all of its broader provinces, not less than as a duplex passion, love carries a brave impulse, having much the same blindness to all but the thing to be done, and doing that though the heavens were to fall. The list of unselfish heroes is long and creditable. It is something to venture for ourselves; but there comes a time in the growth of the heart when we will venture for others, and then our courage is enchanted, and rises to the sublime and godlike. Sympathy breeds a higher order of heroism. Tie the heart to the people with an affirmative bond, and it will dare to the last degree, and give us a crop of Spartans to die for a nation's freedom, or of Howards to face contagion and pestilence, or any needed order of humane heroes. Demosthenes was timid save when pleading for Athens or Greece, and then no man was bolder. Great generals know this secret, and rally their troops on their broader relations.

Thus, Napoleon, in his African campaign, told his men that "forty centuries were looking down upon them from the Pyramids;" Nelson issued his famous order that "England expects every man will do his duty;" Cromwell conjured with the Commonwealth; and Washington, with colonial firesides and a nation of unborn freemen. The gravity of the occasion was immeasurably increased thus, and braced courage in an equal proportion. The best educated soldiers, who can comprehend principles and be mounted on broad aims, are ever the bravest. And for this reason religion, introducing God and eternity, and a world of universal principles and aims, induces the very sublimity of heroism that will count life as nothing.

Bind us to the universe, ally us to the moral, the true, the beautiful, the infinite, and thus befriend us by inevitable securities, as you will, and what need we fear? Victory is protected, and all else is trivial, neither here nor there. "'The best hearts, Trim, are ever the bravest,' replied my Uncle Toby." The weakness of wickedness is its isolation from the everlasting and secure; that it is cut off and driven out from the inner citadel of the world and its friendly protections, like a man ostracized from

the state and its ægis for some crime, or cast overboard from a ship to run his chance with waves and sharks. Sin has an instinct of having incurred secret and serious hostilities; of being on the wrong side of Fate, in array against Providence, which it looks to meet in unequal contest at the next corner. Vice feels itself to be alone, or in a company worse than none; vulnerable, but without armor; sick, and there is no doctor. It is our better loves that have a sense of being shielded. Virtue has the universe engaged to it, as the planets are under obligation to every grain of sand, and become their keepers, that they shall not fall away and be lost. All true souls are guaranteed safety; and to such defeat is only another form of victory, and failure a shorter road to success. There is no occasion for fear on the line of duty, for the defences are unconquerable. When they pointed Saint Theresa to her poverty to turn her from her exclusive devotion to mercy, she shamed them with the lofty truth and trust of her reply: "Theresa and two sous are indeed nothing; but Theresa, two sous, and God are all things;" and bravely she went on with her work, having all faith in the bank she drew on.

History is full of similar texts from which to preach of the courage of felt relations to the universal. How brave is the young convert when lifted out of himself! How a prayer emboldens! The French general, Montluc, confessed to the frequent rallying of himself in the presence of the enemy by a petition to his Maker. The martyrs have all been conscious of this secure tie, and kept their ears open to the music of the death-psalm, and their eyes calm for the poetry of the curling flames, — as John Brown for the beauty of the Virginia hills, upon which he sweetly remarked on the way to his cross and crown. Reposing on the side of justice, purity, humanity, and God, we shall meet death in any form with heroic composure, or life of the severest order with serenity: we can thus equal the Apostles, Socrates, Latimer, Ridley, and Sir Thomas More. One likes to read of the good and trustful Sir Thomas as he appeared on the scaffold, it so commends one to seek out and ally himself to things eternal. When they had laid his head on the block, where it rested as quietly as if on a pillow, he discovered that the axe must sever also his beard, and ordered the headman to adjust it. "It is of no

consequence," he was told: "give thyself no trouble." "It is of little consequence, indeed, to me," said More, "but it is a matter of some importance to you that you should understand your profession, and not cut through my beard when you had orders only to cut off my head." All the high anecdotes of dying heroes are more than sermons to us; for the same principle of alliance between virtue and valor, faith and fearlessness, a sense of the infinite and of the secure, pervades all circles.

It only remains now to further commend courage, by naming a few of its yet unnamed uses. And here we can only offer an inventory and not a discussion. Courage saves on many expenses that cowardice is ever incurring; will not waste on wines for the expectant and craving; nor on too many and too costly dresses and coats for fashion's sake, journeys that should be postponed or foregone, houses a story too high for use or beauty, furniture beyond means, and funerals so costly that death becomes an exorbitant claim on one's estate; courage is husbandry and economy down to the line of duty. It also shields from insolence, keeps rights respected and intact; has the key turned against bores, in justice to time and nerves; sets bullies

and encroachers easily back in their places. "If thou suffer a calf to be laid on thee," say the Orientals, "within a little they 'll clap on a cow," — but courage is in time and forbids the calf. It makes our look or word potent as bayonets, and has a host of enemies in flight. It keeps the dogs from barking at us, the horses from rearing and backing, the bulls from tossing their horns, the very hornets and bees from menacing; for all these have some mystic sense of how it is with us, and are respectful to the brave as they are not to the cowardly. It saves circumlocutions and valuable moments and hours, by going straight to its end. Pope said it cost Addison a sheet of paper and a nervous hour to write a dun; and timidity always dallies, keeps from its point, and often goes home without doing its errand. There are men and women who go about much as if begging the privilege of life, having a painful apologetic air, always haunting the corners and by-ways, shrinking where they ought to advance, peeping and peering where they should send eye-beams like ramrods, — whom a dash of heroism would brace and bless, and set into a new world. Courage takes counsel of its hopes; waits for troubles, and does not borrow

them; thinks the bugs tick in the wall because they want to, and that all omens are old women's whims; and does not die a thousand times, but once only, and then with much grace and beauty.

VII.

THE HOME.

"One small spot
Where the tired mind may rest, and call it Home.
There is magic in that little word!
It is a mystic circle that surrounds
Comforts and virtues never known beyond
The hallowed limit." — SOUTHEY.

"The first sure symptom of a mind in health
Is rest of heart, and pleasure felt at home."
YOUNG.

"The parent love the wedded love includes,
The one permits the two their mutual moods,
The two each other know 'mid myriad multitudes."
MARGARET FULLER.

FOR a little time in the life of almost every boy there holds sway a roving or nomadic tendency. He is impatient of home; will cut loose and be off; will have a taste of all adventures, join the wildest expedition that starts, try all the zones, and have a look at the whole world. His impulses are centrifugal; and we may expect to wake any morning and find he has run away. This is no doubt a shrewd

strategy of Nature in the interest of discovery, the conquest of virgin acres, new centres of civilization, general expansion. Too much centralization is overcome by making the distant and untried magical to the lad's imagination. There are wanted pioneers, young and fearless, in a thousand quarters, — east, west, north, and south; and through early impulses, stirring the best blood, Nature bids in opposition to the prayers, tears, hopes, and bribes of anxious mothers, who would tie their boys to their apron-strings.

But the wayward instinct spends itself at length, and our wanderer is seized by some deeper and more primal power of his being. The wild man, the rover, the victim of locomotion, has his day, and another and superior man steps in; and he will have a home. In lieu of a better habitation, man betakes him to a hutch of boards, a log cabin, a mud embankment thatched with boughs, or even a hole in the rocks; and marries any thing for a wife, — on our far frontier, some red man's squaw; in Africa, a thick-lipped negress; in China, a tea-colored wench; and in Ireland, the lowest piece of bog that is animated; and in patriarchal fashion surrounds himself with children, whining,

prattling, toddling tow-heads, in whom he sees as in no other faces on the planet endearing features. He is now like one who has overtaken a flying destiny, and sits him down to a content, so rich and sufficient he can spare both the past and the future.

Our sea-faring towns — Marblehead, Gloucester, Chatham, and New Bedford — abound in instances of the facile adaptation of homeless rovers, sailors, whalers, and vagabonds, to household conditions. Old Salt makes a fine family man. Bluff Tarpaulin takes him a wife, and now see how his tanned face beams with fireside sentiments! Their hoarse, ocean-like voices, bred by competing with winds, waves, the war of elements, the uproar of Neptune, hush into cooing and chuckling over cradles. Suddenly and magically their great hard hands seem to be endowed by miracle with a perfect sense of touch, or experience the new birth of some finer latent trait, and pass from the hauling of cables and reefing of sails to toying with gossamer and butterflies' wings. Should not old Salt and Tarpaulin be henceforth engravers, jewellers, dealers in needles and laces, or professional oculists, and not sailors? But how has this perfect art been acquired so? In what

school have they learned these delicate and brilliant feats? They were only pupils of the all-wise Mother of us all; or, as the bee is born to build better than the geometer, the swallow to migrate without knowing or asking his way, and the ugly bulb to send forth the beautiful flower, by a reason that is before and above reasoning, so men and women are seized by some finer instinct, and pair and marry and make a home, which, among the rudest, will share many of the traits of paradise.

Home-building is a game that Nature plays at, and with loaded dice. All hearts are weighted with this gravity. Cupid may be blind, as they say; but one notices the little pilot sails his craft very directly toward the family port. The home is guaranteed and guarded by laws and attractions like those which hold the stars suspended in their places.

The pure and good want no phalanstery, and much less a low and sensual chaos. There is a self-respect in the blood, that would keep it in known and honored channels. It is love, and never lust, that covets children; and these are the more interesting if they carry the family mark and identity, betokening that the bond is the more perfect as it is written out with red

ink and sealed with the household stamp. But the soul carries a stronger instinct of selection and organism. The most perfect bias is dual and also spiritual. Polygamy betrays a lack of refinement as well as virtue; evinces a lower, cruder, less secure stage of civilization. But a "free-love," which is no love, and marriage for divorce, are a mania bred by muddy natures; are the dream and philosophy of Lotharios and Venuses; are more brutal than human, and altogether undivine. Domestic communism, however honestly organized, by whatever saints, is a rope of sand, to which Nature refuses, as often as the experiment is made, her adhesive lime and bitumen; no genius or virtue can bind what is thus repellant; whilst a lawless and lustful socialism, however vouched for by the rhetoric of innocence, or mysterious raps in pine tables, or spirits of the night, is diabolical to the last degree. No vestment of sanctity, no pious incantations, no smooth pleas concerning affinities, can exalt the lewd and base. The established family, clean to the last drop of its blood and in all the features of its faces, orbed in purity of flesh and spirit, loved because truly owned and respected, is the normal type or grouping of humanity. Alike for purposes of

beauty, progress, virtue, companionship, contentment, the universe is wisely made spiral, or of wheels within wheels; and one of the favorite centres or circles, as any eye can see, is the home. The higher we ascend, the more sensitive and perfect is this social organism. The animal bond dissolves with the period of dependence; or is thereafter not a tie of blood, but only one of familiarity. Patagonians easily drop out of the family; so do all savages. But we can see what is aimed at, in the story of the English lord who, amid weighty duties of state, wrote to his mother daily for more than a score of years. The civilized man, though he wander to the ends of the earth, has one dear spot and sacred circle ever in his eye and heart,— most likely has his travelling-bag stored with their miniatures, which he mingles with every scene to heighten the charm, and uses as the best sauce to his daily meals. "The only victory over love is flight," said Napoleon; but he said it because he never knew, like most, a love that cannot be escaped: he knew only that cold kind which he claimed to have for his "brother Duroc, because he never shed a tear." A right love, centring in a home, is unconquerable by any and all methods, and knows the spirit, if it shall

never know the pain or wear the crown of a martyr. For the fireside the true souls hope to live, but dare to die. The daily task is not a task, but a delight, when it is taken up to further the joy and culture of the household. They are not crosses, — the watchings, servings, sufferings, which the heart assumes for its own.

The family meets with a serious check in the emigration of our day, carrying off the young men and leaving the young women at home. Steam and railroads and remote enterprises are inimical to marriage as a first effect. But the masculine colonies in California, Oregon, Nevada, and Australia, washing their linen in the sluices, sewing on their own buttons, wandering about forlorn on Sabbath days, drinking, fighting, degenerating, open way for families, schools, churches, weddings, and the oldest order of things. It is one generation spending itself roughly for the next; the sacrifice by Joseph and Jane, Thomas and Tabby, Clement and Clementina, and many compeers, of just relations and joys, for the sake of communities and states. It is a costly bargain, but still a paying of less for more, — a few firesides for many, as the ratio of one to ten or many times ten. It is a rough piece of social fate that cannot well be

avoided, and, as kindly in its intent, is to be philosophically endured and made the best of. They who go must look into the results of their wild and hopeful work for their wages, must draw on the future for their pay; and they who stay, escaping hardships for which they are not fitted by nature or training, must find solace in fulfilling many a fine task for themselves and others.

After fate, then come the real enemies of the household, folly and sin. Lust plays its evil part with the marital vow. But the prime dragon is extravagance. The cost of the home is an insanity. Who but the sons of Midas may venture, in these times, to plant the roof-tree that draws gold so freely into its circulations? The young man's fears — the young woman's also — are founded on mathematics, and from that point of view are quite justifiable; and it is essential either to cancel the faculty that adds and subtracts, or to drop out the moral sense, which is fatal, or to change the character of the problem. Jacob is well enough, and Janette is divine; but how about the costly *et cetera*, — the high rents, latest styles of furniture, up-town dry-goods, Paris fashions, Saratoga and Newport hotel bills, trips to Europe, opera tickets, turn-

outs, servants and subalterns, parties and dinners? Here is the rub. This is the lion's den, or the bottomless pit. Through all the ranks from low to high, there is the same unhappy discrepancy of income and outgo; ugly margins beyond the most favorable figures; chasms to leap that are fearfully suggestive of the bottom of the ditch. How to sail the domestic craft on this high sea without wind? is the question. How to fetch the pump without water? How to hoodwink and cheat fortune? In short, how to make one dollar play the part of ten or twenty, according to the scale proposed for the display? It is clear the odds are the wrong way; and hence recoil, a cautious courtship, a half love, a long delay, and finally no home; the promising cloud ending in a dry shower. And still no signs of retrenchment, or only of that which our politicians make by increasing expenses; no reform but that of our sots, who add more cups and delirium tremens! Still the ghost of arithmetic stalks abroad, and our young folks turn pale and retreat! We wait the advent of a new idea of life, which alone can set matters right.

And if we look into the case of multitudes already caught in the duplex and multiplex limbo, we shall see the domestic riot and rout

that extravagance is leading on. The picture is not to the credit of human nature, but must be sketched. There are plenty of households that are bitten with disappointment, and count life a hardness, and creep through the world like back-door beggars, because they cannot reach a place among the showy elect, — as if life were an affair of satins and feathers, or nothing at all. Here are multitudes blessed with means, who have given in to the surface ideal, and are living up to the last dollar of their income, and shivering on the brink of a gulf that opens its perilous depths just before. Against their better sense their pride dares the peril of a stress in the market, a season of sickness, a conflagration, which would render them subjects of charity, though scarcely of pity. Not a few venture extravagance on a borrowed basis, looking to a pay-day which never comes. Their passion for display dismisses prudence; and, worse yet, it turns principle into the street and shuts the door against its return, however touchingly it pleads outside. Honor is staked like some cheap commodity. Every year regiments of young and middle-aged men, overruled by the mania for cost and show, to please themselves or their wives or sweethearts, become rogues and

thieves, pilferers, purloiners, peculators; and swell the prison lists, or go clear because the witnesses and judges are in the same boat, or find their escape through the low moral tone of the time. Fashion will steal her ornaments, waiving all semblance of bargain, if she cannot have them on other terms. The party who lives for appearance, and deems expense the standard of merit and comfort, can no longer be safely trusted; but, like the inebriate, shares a passion which, under temptation, will break with all better aims and usages. But the evil is not all told yet. There is this further sad fact, that countless homes are every year unroofed and set in the public square, exposed to a vulgar gaze, to escape a cost it were wiser and more heroic to curtail. What thousands, unequal to the standards of domestic cost, are on the eve of becoming boarding-house victims and hotel dupes! What a sacrifice of a divine peace and privacy, which is the first principle of domesticity and the great need of life! Instead of a descent that were an ascent, because a high fealty to the home and an opening of it to the betterments of a true simplicity, there is resort to these fatal and cowardly escapes. And, moreover, it must be whispered at a low breath, on

the testimony of medical men, that extravagance seeks extension by shortening the birth-lists, — its evil sway not only blighting the born, but blasting the unborn.

But the case, bad as it is, is not hopeless. It was long ago settled that Nature knows a remedy for every disease. If we send the ball beyond the mark, she sends it back; or the greater the excess of action, the greater and surer the reaction. A foolish costliness will cure itself in time, as a fever burns itself out in fourteen or twenty-one days. Pope said of the Duke of Buckingham, "He got the better of his large estate;" and this victory over wealth is always to be looked for. Riches become plain and respectable with a second or third generation.

The better part of human nature cannot be permanently bought off; the game of the senses plays out; it is found at length that the best use of life is to live, and that money is good only as it serves to this worthy end. Our old New England families, who hold ample inherited estates, will be found to wisely place the emphasis on the best interests, — character, culture, refinement, better company, better conversation, modest travel with sensible people, and so apart from merely fashionable highways; on extension

of thought and fellowship into the realms of nature, art, books, society; on transmutation of gold into spirit and power. They have learned how to be rich by long practice, and rightly hold wealth as being able to do without it, which Goethe, who was both rich and plain in his habits, thought to be one of the finest accomplishments. They have found that wealth is for the better sufficing of nature, for deriving more advantages from the world for the senses and the faculties, and especially the latter. It is somewhat to elevate and enlarge the sphere of one's life, to secure more and better relations with the universe, to buy wisdom, beauty, a better power of hospitality, a better circle of friends because a better social desert, an interest in the cycles of the past, the stars, the ages to come, and to lay the whole world under contribution. A vulgar extravagance is the effervescing of raw wealth, as new cider and wine work off a gas before they become placid and palatable. Extravagance is a Saurian virtue to be superseded by a better grade of life; or the law of selection, best and best, prevails at length in the domain of habits.

No lesson of the ages is plainer than this, that all excess and top-heaviness of externals cheap-

ens people. We have only so much force to expend; and if we yield it in one quarter, we cannot in another, as the boy who spends his only dime for a trumpet has none for a primer. A glance will detect how one and another have spent themselves, since every word and act are always typical or transparent. In an instant, we know whether this is a fop or a man, and this a feather or a woman, and have their history in advance of their telling it. Like the chameleon we show our diet. The eye is deep or shallow, and betrays our discipline. By such a trifle as how one uses a handkerchief we can gauge one's rank. We are hung all over with signs. William and Mary of England adopted the peacock as the emblem of their domestic grandeur, which makes it certain that the bird's ugly feet and bad voice must also have been pertinent symbols; for royalty is not exempt from the law that all excess is paid for by some defect. Plutarch said, "The Rhodians built their houses as if they were to be immortal;" and then adds the very words we were waiting to hear, "and furnished their souls as if they were but for a day." On the integrity of the universe it is certain that the vain king who made a jest of the humbleness of Ben Jonson's home, the orna-

ments of which were himself, the best minds of his age, plain fare and high comforts, had the true and right retort sent back from the great poet: "Tell his Majesty that his soul lives in an alley." Put the main cost of the ship in the sails, and the hulk will be cheap. The practical man draws from his ideality; the idealist, from his motherwit and solid sense, like the profound genius who, caught in a shower and driven to a tree for shelter, proposed to his friend, with much gravity of voice and look, when the rain began to drench through, that they go to the next tree. If you build your life into the surface, what have you left for the centre? If your altars are all set up to the lower gods, — dress, furniture, dinners, displays, — where is your higher worship? If your home is in the expense and show, and commands your powers to superficial ends, then it is clear you have not built the better home into which the wise and worthy most desire to enter, and where all life is best fostered.

The visible habitation should be subordinate and subservient to the invisible, as the body to the spirit, or the word to the idea. Do not hide yourselves behind upholstery, and serve dinners to the flesh only. We enter some homes — if

gay saloons void of character may be so called — to be at once apprised that all has been set in order for effect, and that we are expected to admire and applaud. The card of invitation should often be from the house and not the inmates; and, with change of names, might well be copied from this form: "The unrivalled apartments of the McFlarers will be opened for inspection on ——. N.B. You are expected to bring your lorgnettes and a revised list of interjections!" The sequel proves the fitness of the card, for the McFlarers are found to be only two pieces more of the ornamentation; and all better hospitality is out of the question. It is a revel of the senses, and the starvation of all better hungers and thirsts. Your bodies are brought to a paradise that would satisfy a Mahometan, but your souls to a cabbage-garden from which they would fly to partake the humblest of supplies with more of Attic seasoning. "A fig for your bill of fare!" said Dean Swift: "what is your bill of company?" The ordering of the home is a revelation of character, and reacts as a discipline after its own type.

Greatness never wastes itself on domestic or public parades; and they who do so waste themselves can never be great, as exercising a lower

order of talent at the expense of a higher. "Who has the fewest wants is most like God," said Socrates; or the truest life, whether of one or many, approaches nearest to sufficing itself through its inward qualities, and can spare on the side of the senses. Thought, love, sensibility, character, accomplishments, — these subordinate the outward as somewhat that is inferior. The best part of the home should ever be regarded as personal, and rigidly held so. It is first and most a question of good breeding, fine tastes, simple and charming habits, wealth of mind and heart, and handsome hospitality to the better nature. Our distinction while in the flesh is still that we are superior to it; and a wise word, or a pleasant sentiment, or a display of chaste beauty, or a spark of wit, or the sunshine of unaffected love, for which angels would consent to leave Paradise, is yet the very best fireside offering. Make your feast to the higher life, of the hidden manna, so far as you can.

The true ideal of the home is, no doubt, one of tasteful plainness, oftenest realized by the middle class and the professions, who throw the advantage on the side of life, freedom, ease, education, and a conversation that is music because of its higher tones and inspirations.

One likes to read the words of Eckermann descriptive of Goethe's home: "It was not showy, but simple and noble in its appointments." The wise will not consent to be house-ridden, to the loss of better liberties and joys. A gaudy saloon cheapens the family life, as an Oriental sky fosters soft and effeminate habits, and the luxuriance of the West Indies breeds sensuous and Creole traits. By our superior weight we should hold down the house, and not the house us by its. Life is not for the structure, though often lost in it or used up by it, but the structure for the life; and it should fit it, as the shell fits the turtle, by being an outgrowth from it. The home is largely in its thoughtful and cheerful spirit and power. When we go to see the wise and good, who greet us with true self-poise and dignity and lift us into their own atmosphere, we learn the indifference of circumstances; or that the cot is a palace when it covers the cultivated and virtuous, as it was the head of the table where MacDonald sat; and the palace is uninviting that covers ignorance. Character is more than riches, as we name Plato with more interest than Crœsus; and, like a fine jewel, a fine life loses nothing but rather gains by a plain setting.

The soul has a claim in the ordering of the house, which it is fatal to waive; and I should count it an unspeakable victory, like reclaiming waste acres, or giving liberty to captives, if I could lead one family or two to give books — to say nothing of pictures — their due place and influence. Nothing can be more friendly to home life than a small library (only scholars need a large one) of well-chosen books. A love of good authors, a rich charm in itself, breeds a disrelish of low company; and Plutarch, Cervantes, Scott, Burns, Lamb, Wordsworth, Fénelon, and others, are a part of the police force of the world, with the advantage of being in good time with their high service, whilst batons are too often late. The books to buy for the family are those of the *highest* genius, which, speaking the best language and sentiments of all ages, can never grow stale; and for which young and old, in their best hours, will have a keen relish. The volumes that will only bear a glance, or a single reading, should be left to the circulating library. A score or two of meritorious works, starting with Mother Goose and ending with Shakspeare, might be named, which every home should possess, even if it have to shorten its dinners, or lengthen the

term of its old clothes, to command them; for whoever gets a taste of these is instantly another being, as if he were taken from the close and stifling air of a city and set at once into the bracing and charming salubrity of a high mountainous region.

There are a few authors whose mission is as universal and beautiful as that of the sun and moon; and the inner and deeper eye needs but to catch their light to know its fitness and charm, and feel a better longing thereafter. Many a new birth of taste and aspiration dates from the first reading of "Plutarch's Lives," which is saturated with healthy tonics, or some other of the noted books of the centuries. What an electric shock, arousing the heart and freeing the wings of the imagination, has "Pilgrim's Progress" so often and so uniformly imparted! The "Spectator" made Dr. Franklin the classic essayist of America, often as Addisonian as Addison; and it is still among the best of contributions to home literature.

The great poets are always to be commended, for there are times when life is rapt and musical, and we can come up to genius to find the very blessing we want. The poets are the friends of our best moods, and for these

it is always the part of wisdom to have made provision in advance, as the smith has his hammer ready when the iron is hot. There are selections from Coleridge, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Whittier, Longfellow, and many of the tuneful choir, which, being once known, will be found essential to life, and will be fled to every now and then to serve as sacrament or stimulus or balm; and the young who have had this want created, and its source of supply made known, are better fitted to go from home, and have hours of leisure fall on their hands. To know well and fondly some half dozen of Shakspeare's plays, — Hamlet, Macbeth, Julius Cæsar, Henry VIII., Merchant of Venice, Romeo and Juliet, and besides these three or four more, according to taste, — is to any youth or adult a legacy that gives to dollars a paltry look. A share in the world's poet is above price. A few novels which are found to be read after ten years from the date of their publication, and have proved themselves to be classics, are to be brought into the home library.

A severe culling from the world of books, to get the fittest and best, is the right measure for the family to adopt. Instead of counting in, it is mostly a process of counting out. An ade-

quate collection of fine authors, to bring dignity and cheer to the fireside, is not often a question of cost, but oftener one of disposition. A twenty, thirty, forty thousand dollar mansion, with only an armful of cheap volumes in it, gathered at random from pedlars or sought on the report and uproar of the hour, is no novelty in our cities. Madam's last dress for the party — the tenth or twentieth in her wardrobe, with others to come — has cost more than all the books under the roof, whereby, if at all, the better life of the family is to be robed and adorned. But this defect is general. Our broadcloths and silks usually insult our book-shelves. Our reading accuses us. Our habit of acquiring our books, having no forethought or reference to the canons of good taste, is a fatal one. The choicest fountains are but rarely opened in our homes; and it is perhaps well that insipid waters breed disgust and drive us to the daily paper and such society as will tolerate us. When the fireside shall furnish good books, it will create good readers, and life will be set to a better key through acquaintance with the great and virtuous. If youth can be drawn to the love of a better literature, the Sunday school may spare a good share of its anxieties. A glance at the

reading classes of the world will show that the noble authors hold some commanding relation to the best types of life.

The household cannot be spared as an aid to virtue; for its tender intimacy, open as the day, keeping no secrets, is morally bracing, and often leads us to live to the eye and heart of each other after the noblest fashion. Not only are we careful for each other's good opinions, but we would gladden by our virtues. The home is a much needed hospital of moral repairs, since our characters, like our garments, are most liable to rents abroad, and are best mended at home. Every boy comes in from the street full of some new naughtiness: some bad word, whose novelty charmed him, or in which he fancied a smack of smartness, or for which he had some strange relish, has fastened to his tongue, and he rips it out to the very alarm of his pious trainers; some evil story, liable to deposit a vicious sediment, runs in his memory; some ugly taint, lingering in his blood from a vain or cruel or dishonest ancestor, has been stirred to festering; and his mother and sisters find it is not his hands and face only that need daily washing, but that there are deeper stains and the need of a moral bath. But the peril outside

is constant. It is running the gauntlet all the time in the public arenas. We stand in slippery places. Pleasure, trade, politics, fashion, society, — these are found to be never free from a malarious and infecting atmosphere. In the rush to California in 1849, it was said every man who went, whether bruiser, banker, or clergyman, deliberately threw up his conscience and adopted the morals of rogues; and the business marts, exchanges, stock-boards, and corporations of our great cities, seem to be but another and nearer California, where the comers are not expected to be much better, but only to make better pretensions, appear in better liveries, have their artifices and tricks a little more refined, and to cover their misdeeds somewhat more adroitly. Competition crowds hard on conscience, almost to the point of its inevitable fracture; and not a few stand ready to succumb. It is openly confessed by adepts, and clear enough to every eye, that the politics of the day can hardly be touched without contamination.

> "Here if you beat a bush,
> 'Tis odds you 'll start a thief."

When rogues are installed in high places, with honors, as now, is it not best, say the ambitious,

to join them? When conceit is so cockered and crowned, who is likely to hold himself modest and level? Who can keep a gentle and beaming face against this sharp flint of the world's hardness? When such prices are paid for shams and half-merits, not only in general society but in pulpits as well, is solid worth any longer worth the while? If the world is a discipline of virtue, it is also of vice; and antidotes, reagents, tonics, safeguards, every kind of moral protection and support, are a daily need. It is the good home that will supply these in largest measure. Let the man go down to his day's task with wife and children pinned on his sleeve, and kept hourly before him by the vision of a high and tender love, and his virtue will not only be braced, but even made brave. Here is an amulet worth having.

Our identity is enlarged by marriage and births, and life takes on a new importance, suddenly assumes dignity, is better secured by stays and weights, like a ship that is ballasted, and abounds with other and higher motives than before. The heart and moral sense are now involved. Bachelors are not held by the same healthy responsibilities and attractions as their wedded brothers; on an average, they do not

set the same store by their manhood and character, seeing vice less in its relations; in wartime, they are rightly urged to go into the army, as being of less consequence out; less accustomed to live for others, their charities are never so free or prompt, nor in so good proportion. The house is a citadel, the hearth is a shrine. All high fellowship has a moral side and is a discipline of virtue. Our hopes and fears for one and another are graduated by the rank and quality of their companions. Death is easier to parents who have seen their sons and daughters well married, hopefully caged, set in family relations, since they know the greater security as well as superior joys of domestic life; and also believing that the coaxing of Nature, which begun with Adam and Eve and has survived the intervening centuries, attacking with pristine vigor Ernest and Celeste, cannot be to any but the best of ends. By driving us indoors and into family groups around firesides, the stern climates, with their frosts and snows, have served civilization in ways not often set down to their account; for the Northern man, forced to seek and foster his abode and hold close fellowship with its inmates, will always, other things being equal, be superior to the Southern man.

The best match for the saloon is the home. When pure and cheerful, this rarely fails to win. Let the feast of delights — games, sports, pastimes, dolls, balls, back-gammon, cards, music and dancing — be given at the fireside, with a hearty consent, and, better still, with active co-operation, by heads of families, and rarely will youth, of either sex, descend to any lower plane for their joys. All the fireside virtues are apt to become fast colors; and as the bird carries his native hues in all his flights, we can never hide these early home dyes.

The fireside should be dedicated to quiet and peace in the interest of our weariness, with which we come in from the world, and, what is more important, to befriend refinement of thought and feeling. A day of social contacts robs us of our vitality, as if each person we fell in with, however casually, were a magnet and drew away our electricity. We easily squander life on crowds. An assembly of eyes drains us to exhaustion. Faces are absorbents. We rightly say, visiting is the hardest work we do, as being a tax on our finest feelings, which are volatile in proportion to their fineness. At the close of the "social season," society at Washington and New York bears a languid and

heavy air; the countenances droop like the costumes; eyelashes and laces hang with a dreary indifference; the scene is spiritless; for these people have mutually used up each other's life. Our natures seem to be covered with valves that open one way and shut the other, and we seem to give at all interviews and on all excursions infinitely more than we get. The world is remorseless in its drafts upon vitality. Women usually return with sick-headaches from so sudden a depletion. Men come up from the day's contacts like bodies walking without souls. The tired have an imperative need of homes for rest; and yet some of them find the family more of a din than the world. Here often are all the Furies of Greek fable and more let loose to their infernal revels. It is all clatter and blast at some firesides; braying of loud contradictors; barking of curs; screaming of children; slamming of doors; tramping of heedless shoes; and even the clock keeps up the game and clashes its harsh discordant iron every hour. It is a Babel, and a dreariness and distraction. But the home should soothe and compose. Fuller says of the good wife, "Her children, though many in number, are none in noise;" that is, their ways of frolic are so well timed and tempered, so chaste

and fit, so full of nature and reason, that their hilarity is not noise, but music, — noise being discordance and senseless clamor, which play and mirth are not.

In our ideal homes, when we get them, we shall have speaking-tubes from kitchen to attic; and long ago Sir Christopher North set the fine example of having doors so constructed they could not slam. The fame of carpets is to be chanted by all lovers of quiet; and the man should have a monument with an appreciative inscription, who invented the steel or silver chime for the time-piece on the mantel. Let us train our voices to the softer keys. Let us check the St. Vitus's dance in our movements, describing more circles and fewer angles. Let us treat the chairs with some gentleness and grace. Let us come in and go out with due moderation. For we may set it down as beyond question that a clamorous household, living in a tempest or at the end of its tongues, is never a thoughtful one; nor is it peaceful and renewed in spirit through rest. Dr. Lyman Beecher said of his pulpit efforts, he "always roared when he had nothing to say;" and Pope's satire, for the benefit of the vociferous, is known to all: "It is with narrow-souled people as with narrow-necked bottles, —

the less they have in them the more noise they make in pouring it out." Bedlam is hostile to ideas as to serenity, and bodies can only be lean and ghastly under such distractions.

A sitting apart, as in separate rooms, is now and then a fine domestic habit, deriving some of the unspeakable benefits of solitude: it both deepens the tone and enriches the quality of character. A peaceful life is most likely to be a full one, with finer and acuter sensibilities; better related to beauty and poetry and all higher matters; more dignified and self-respecting. Repose is the secret of power in persons, pictures, statues, architecture, books, and Nature, as if it were a means of retaining as well as disclosing life; and health demands a frequent pausing to restore the balance of the system and keep up perfect circulations. The night, if spent in healthy sleep, after proper evening hours, reduces the day's chaos, and we are new every morning. Who does not know the magic of a brief pause in the midst of the worst confusion? A calm of five minutes will invite back our vagrant ideas and powers. We often find ourselves in the worst wilderness, by closing our eyes. Leave the sponge to itself a little, and it will fill with water. In short, the home

should be like a hush and a lullaby in this headlong, whirling, noisy, furious, and distracted world of the nineteenth century; a nook apart from the thoroughfares; a grot or bower under the sky, where the beautiful spirits of the air will hover and dance; its atmosphere should be a little Oriental and dreamy, as if exhaled from poppies and balsams.

A main light of the fireside is the light of the friends' faces who gather around it. But the poverty of American households in social wealth and cheer is likely to tell at length against the genius and greatness of the country. Aside from the staid rural districts — and where now are these? — and a few old residents of our cities, whose race is about run, there are no ideal neighborhood relations, no families who can properly go in and out without their boots blacked, their kids on, and cards in hand, and under the restraints and formalities that rightly belong to strangers. We properly give leisurely permissions to cross sacred lines, bar our hearts and homes against the heedless intrusion of people we do not know. We are not a race of gushers, who delight to inundate each other with cheap sentiment at first interviews. Unless our affections are fickle and crude, we do

not take to the latest comers. We do not care to seek out and offer our hearts to the family who moved to town yesterday, and have given their landlord notice they shall leave to-morrow; the game does not pay for the chase. A social chaos and drift, promising nothing, or only vexation, force us to withdrawal and isolation.

Easy and happy neighboring, as of old, is out of the question, and can never return but with more settled habits. And what is the result? Eclipse of the light of fireside friendships; a coldness of society life; a peering and staring habit of curiosity; a system of brief calls in best clothes, which is painful and threatens idiocy, breeds nervous and flurried ways, lowers self-respect, has no deeper constitutional value or delight as of the answering of life to life; or, worse yet, the end is utter seclusion and hermitage. In my boyhood I was drawn with other young folk by curiosity to visit a hermit's house, in the midst of a forest, that was so seldom entered as to render it famous; but the country is so full of domestic cloisters to-day that we cease to wonder at them. The thresholds are countless which are seldom or never crossed with friendly, chatty intent; roofs enough of them which never echo to the free and familiar voices of

friends; hearts by the tens of thousands that have no intimacies. Our latch-strings are not hung out. Our fittest social symbol is lock and key. Under the circumstances our ways are naturally enough full of suspicions and guarded. We mount stilts and confront the lady and gentleman of the next door on our dignity. With whom can we omit the formalities, and begin our interview at the better point of genuine and genial familiarity and kindness? It would not be easy to tell.

But what to do? It is a clear case for the wise art of concentration, attempting less to accomplish more. Let us dismiss the public, as being too broad for our necessary haste and brevity, and seek out and foster, to the better degrees, a few friendships, which are well assorted, whereof will be great peace, beauty, cheer, and renewing of the heart. Large and miscellaneous parties are vulgar, but may serve to deplete plethoric coffers and gratify a taste for parade: the caterers are the only sensible parties engaged in them. "Calls" are stupid beyond the stir of an idle curiosity. Too much privacy breeds ill habits of mind, and a sure collapse of the heart. Our hope is in restricting social relations; in having a few friends and

making much of them; and the closer their door is to ours, the better; and it were best of all that it should be so near as to spare hat and gloves, which are sure to fetter the spirit and draw on a little reserve. The best models of social intercourse are still to be found among the peasants of the Old World; and luckily our country is having some of these fine examples imported from Germany and Switzerland and France. But will they break our reserves? I fear not until we are less of vagrants or nomads than now. Friendship is as dignified in its spirit as an Oriental Sheik or Pacha, and abjures haste and inconsideration.

I pray you, do not set your more transient guests up as lords and ladies of that importance that they are above self-help; nor yourselves down as lackeys and chamberlains to dance attendance. The chasm is fatal to a true hospitality, which, so far as may be, adopts visitors into the free and easy relations of the family, with as few distinctions as may be. Only laziness or vanity, which are alike to be omitted from our invitations, can submit to be thus served. Nothing more pains a genuine democrat than to be treated as if he were an aristocrat, since he must resist, which impeaches the

good sense of his host, or consent to stand in a false light and betray his own character, which is altogether the worst alternative. "Please help yourself," is good English, and indicates the best of breeding, since it shows that the party uttering it does not propose to duck and belittle himself or herself in menial servility, and carries a compliment to guests by recognizing their wit and ability, and superiority to snobs and exactors of attention. A social level is the most respectable and congenial. We like to have those come to see us who are easily and gladly of us; but we can spare such as are conceited and expectant, and who think they bring all the honor to the house and can get none from it.

Conversation is the best victory won in the domestic circle, since it is the key to all other successes. When we are at length well delivered from ourselves and filled with the good humors of the hour, the mutual game of tongues becomes a sacred diversion. We take no note of time, amid happy communions, because we are then superior to it, and would never bid adieu to the lofty condescensions of thought and feeling. Like Joshua we would chain the sun and block the moon, but to ends as beautiful as they are bloodless.

The real soul of the home is love, which can even enchant lowliness and sweeten sacrifice. It is a fine bit of domestic romance, though true as Euclid: Maddelina, the beautiful daughter of Nicolo, rejecting the wealthy Pietro whom she respected but did not love, and flying to the arms of Correggio, a poor but promising young artist, whose fame has since filled the world, for whom she had a great and genuine attachment. Referring to his rival's envy, Correggio said one day, "Ah! Maddelina, we will not be too hard on poor Pietro; his disappointment is heavy; he is solitary in his plenty, which thou mightest have shared with him: now thou hast poverty and" — let us fancy the glow in his eye and the charming accent in his voice, as he finished the sentence — "and only thy Correggio." "And believe me," said the young wife, with enthusiasm, "I should not love thee more if thou hadst all the wealth of Philippo Strozzi." There can be no home without this ancient and simple virtue which enchants all. Love is brave, gentle, cheerful, helpful, hopeful; paints the home with sunset colors; if need be, works the miracle whereby two can live cheaper than one; takes happily to the lower rounds of the ladder, and daily climbs and sings; is the best part of

affluence; is the sweetest sugar still in the costliest feast; imparts magic to the days as they come and go; fills the spaces with Æolian harps; and breeds a finer sense of immortality, for love is impressional and feels a relation to the farthest star and the most distant cycle of time, — nothing being too good for it to believe or hope.

No home touches the best level that does not stand in open fellowship with the sky, or with the spiritual Presence, which is primal and final, and, in all ages, a majestic and commanding fact. All lights are dry lights till tempered by the beams of this Sun. A sense of the Divine is to the soul what lime is to the bones and the vital principle to the blood. To lean on Providence in high repose makes of us other beings. No faith in God, then no far-reaching aspirations, for our ways are short: duty is one with dust; wisdom, a film of colored mist, to-day here, to-morrow vanished; character, a bubble about to burst; the intuition of the perfect, a cheat, a decoy that leads nowhere; and the over-arching heavens, breeding wondrous ideals, a teasing mockery. Empty orisons are pitiful, but prayer is sublime; and, spoken or unspoken, the religious sentiment is the health of the home.

VIII.

OURSELVES AND OTHERS.

"Society is no comfort
To one not sociable."

SHAKSPEARE'S CYMBELINE.

"'Mid countless brethren, with a lonely heart,
Through courts and cities the smooth savage roams,
Feeling himself, his own low self, the whole;
When he by sacred sympathy might make
The whole one self! self, that no alien knows!
Self, far diffused as Fancy's wing can travel!
Self, spreading still! Oblivious of its own,
Yet all of all possessing!"

COLERIDGE'S RELIGIOUS MUSINGS.

"The truly generous is the truly wise;
And he who loves not others lives unblest."

HOME'S DOUGLAS.

AT the bottom of all human nature we are to look, I suppose, for some venomous sediment which can be stirred; and they are few who come to the end of life without some time having felt that revenge, with fist, teeth, club, or gun, would be a solace. We all hold ourselves at some risk, as carrying in some volcanic depth these sleeping fires. To have ourselves to handle, especially under provocations, is toy-

ing with fire-arms. Whose humanity dare we guarantee against all circumstances? Who has absolute trust in himself? In our cool moments we resolve we will count ten, twenty, a hundred, will say the alphabet from A to Z, will call over the names of all our blood relations from great-grandfathers to second cousins; but passion, like powder, is off before we know it, or can wet a finger to lay on. We blaze, explode, have our comedy or tragedy to its final act; and then repent. When some one sent Cotys a service of costly glass-ware, he instantly broke it, to parry his risk of degrading himself and injuring some unlucky servant who might trip and dash the gift into ruins. Even the Stoics, who were under so great command, whose education was one of restraints and reserves, had nevertheless their cruel first heats, were often too late with themselves. And parents, who should indeed reprove and punish with some degree of warmth, as if every wrong were a high offence and the occasion merited emotion, but never with a wild, unreasoning, hasty anger, are yet often red-hot and given to hard and evil blows that mar, but do not mend.

But worse than the heat of passion against another, which we can endure as a brute in-

stinct, is a cold and cruel malignity, a deliberate malice, which, with a keen relish, plots misery; and, with a deep gust of delight, stands openly or under cover to see the writhing of its victims. Did not some vengeful star come into unhappy conjunction with the birth of such? or had they not the Greek Furies for ancestors? They seem like the vents of an evil principle lurking in Nature, which the races of sharks and hyenas had not adequately provided for. Worse than brutal traits cling to them. Some have tried to explain this love of misery, and the consequent arts and acts of cruelty to which it gives rise, as securing by contrast a more vivid sense of one's own felicity in the absence of pain. It is extorting misery as a background to set off our own joys more effectively. The delight is not in the cloud itself, but in the deeper blue in our own sky to which the cloud contributes, as deformity enhances beauty. To a degree this may be so. But bad as this view makes the matter, showing it thoroughly selfish and unfeeling, I believe the reality is still worse. It looks more as if the feast were in the torture itself, as if the agonies and writhings were the picture that pleased. There must be a sinister humor in the eve. The heart has some

fibre of a cruel texture, which a perfect anatomy would serve to lay bare. What! here is a rosy-faced boy putting pins through the heads of young birds. Behold! that distressed cry from the near trees is music to his ear. Hold you, my little Nero, why will you fling Rover into the pond, and the kitten in the fire, and hit baby that hard blow, and throw stones at the horse which is hitched at the post? What imp looks out from these deeds and reveals his vicious presence? Can we believe the sole relish of the roughs in the cockpit and prize-ring, or of the Spanish *élite* in bull-fights, or of the masses who crowd to executions, is of those aspects of the scenes that are aside from the suffering involved, as of the art, strategy, strength, pluck, or whatever else comes in play? or is the bitter misery, in these cases, the real sweet to them? Here are people in Christian coats and gowns, with prayer-books under their arms, with the smell of the temple about them, contriving, with Mephistophelic interest and craving of cold blood, an array of what artful cruelties for their kind, — traps and pitfalls of scandal, schemes of heartache and despair between lovers, fallings out among dear friends, family jars and scars, and other wicked

devices too numerous and too bad to name, that they may stand and watch at keyholes and share some kind of monstrous joy! These are the rank and file, never a small army, of which the leaders and captains are the Neroes, Lucretia Borgias, Jeffreys, and Bloody Marys. Ordinary passion or anger, struck out of us as a spark of resentment, and sometimes carrying high moral sentiment with it, and always a clear or neutral conscience, is perfection to this low malignity which lurks in the race and is human; and, however we may reluct to confess it, plots mischief for its own pleasure. Anger is hopeful; but malice is the unpardonable sin, which coolly nourishes itself over a cup of tea and is the piquant sauce to parlor feasts. The first we may fear, the second we must hate.

Of more levity and less blackness is the innate peevishness of many people, in their relation to others, to whom the wind always blows from the east and all events bear nettles. There is a temper that is touchy, and crackles on all occasions like dry hemlock boughs in the fire. You shall not escape its petulance, do what you will; for to go or stay, speak or keep silence, dress in coarse costume or fine, say your prayers aloud or to yourself, marry or go single,

eat pickles or honey, it is alike an occasion of offence. Nothing can be right. Some persons not only have corns on their feet, but all over them; every nerve is on the surface, and sore; and any stir, however trifling and well-meant, or a mere sign of motion in the eye, is construed into an ill-intent toward their tenderness. They are waspish, and bristle at every touch. Like a vexed cat, they can never be stroked the right way. In his play of Romeo and Juliet, Shakspeare has well characterized them by bringing face to face, in a state of fussy and frivolous irritability, Mercutio and Benvolio: —

"*Mercutio.* Come, come, thou art as hot a Jack in thy mood as any in Italy; and as soon moved to be moody, and as soon moody to be moved.

Benvolio. And what to?

Mercutio. Nay, an there were two such, we should have none shortly, for one would kill the other. Thou! why thou wilt quarrel with a man that hath a hair more or a hair less in his beard than thou hast. Thou wilt quarrel with a man for cracking nuts, having no other reason but because thou hast hazel eyes. What eye, but such an eye, would spy out such a quarrel? Thy head is full of quarrels, as an egg is full of meat; and yet thy head hath been beaten as addle as an egg for quarrelling. Thou hast quarrelled with a man for coughing in the street, because he hath wakened thy dog that hath lain asleep in the sun. Didst thou not fall out with a tailor for wearing his new doublet before Easter? with another, for tying his new shoes with an old riband? And yet thou wilt tutor me from quarrelling?

Benvolio. An I were so apt to quarrel as thou art, any man should buy the fee-simple of my life for an hour and a quarter.

Mercutio. The fee-simple? O simple!"

And so they would have kept this fretful ball rolling to the end of the interview, had it lasted from that day to this; for the persistence of this trait, like the stretching of rubber, is something remarkable. Everything sleeps at length but weasels and fault-finders. For this reason, Momus, the god of faulting and railing, was the fabled son of Night, to signify that darkness or ignorance did not affect his inveterate habit. None of the gods or goddesses escaped his ill-humored eye and tongue. He blamed Vulcan because he had not made man with glass over his breast, that he could have no secrets. Minerva, he sneeringly averred, constructed her palace ill, because she did not set it on wheels, to avoid a bad neighborhood by easy removal, if it were necessary; and Neptune had made the bull with his horns too far from his eyes, as he could not now be so sure of his blows. When he could find no fault with the person of Venus, as no one can criticise the lily, he complained of the noise of her golden slippers, which should have been made of wool. The best of the Olympic deities could not suit him by any word

or act; and Momus was finally driven out by the gods, who served him right. But in this respect the fable shames us; for the descendants of Momus, irritating as gad-flies, are not generally treated with like justice. A petty fretfulness, save with the sick, and possibly not with them, deserves to be treated without cant or consideration: it is a case for amputation, and not for anodynes or sweetened tea.

But what shall we say of the more dignified contradictors, a numerous class, often wise, usually moral, uniformly brave, one or more of whom must have fallen into every one's circle of acquaintance? They are the pests of good society, and to be dropped from our cards of invitation, as they ceased to ask Dr. Johnson to the celebrated dinner-parties of his time; or they are to be drawn off into a room by themselves, where they may enjoy their tenacious delights without molesting the affable and humane. But there is one abridgment to the success of this device, so far as the host is concerned, which is the necessity he will be under, at last, of summarily sending them home, for two contradictors will hold out all night and after daylight.

From what company can they not spare the

churlish guests, however learned and famous, who bray their ready opposition to every turn of the conversation; who negative all the affirmatives and affirm all the negatives? At a single sitting, when Sir Joshua Reynolds praised Garrick the actor, Johnson annihilated him; and when Gibbon dispraised, Johnson suddenly extolled him; for what to him or any of his temper were justice, kindness, unity, peace, any fine trait of feeling, compared with standing out and constituting the determined opposition? When Johnson asked Laughton to tell him his greatest fault, the latter, with great frankness, took a slip of paper and wrote on it some texts of Scripture about charity. Boswell suggested that they referred to the Doctor's rough way of contradicting people. "And who is the worse for that?" said Johnson. "It hurts people of weak nerves," replied the amiable Boswell. "But I know no such weak-nerved people," blurted out the prince of contradictors.

To the perverse-headed, the wilful, the natures with excess of back-action, there is no side but the other side, and no way but the contrary way; and we have the story, but not the authentication, that a celebrated divine of England got one of these obstinates right, who had fallen into

vice, by preaching to him a gospel of sin, urging him to lapse and grovel, as they advance pigs by trying to drive them backwards: he would be virtuous just for the sake of being perverse, or anything for a little personal victory. A Yorkshire man, who, as we may naturally infer, came honestly enough by this stubborn, mulish, outstanding fibre, once said to Mrs. Gaskell, "My country folk are all alike. Their first thought is how to resist. Why, I myself, if I hear a man say, 'It is a fine day,' find myself instantly trying to make out that it is no such thing." And St. Francis of Sales reports of a barrister, who had such a uniformly heady and unflinching contrary-piece in his wife, that, when she was drowned, he ordered them to "drag the river up stream, as she always went against the current."

The true secret of getting along and living with an antagonizing instinct, which always confronts you, is not to gage it. We can best carry our points by yielding them, as the farmer goes on best with his furrow when he lifts his plow from the opposing rock or root, instead of striving with it. Melancthon could manage Luther because he did not try to manage him, as a pliant twig will often hold a horse which a rigid

post cannot. The hardest nature will not kick against nothing. If the baby is given to a bad resistance and straightens back with high color in its face, humor its whim and sing to it a little, as if you were rather pleased. If the boy or girl is full of "wills" and "wonts," take them with little notice and no reaction, and their cheapness and irrelevancy will soon appear. If your guest rises at any crossing of his thought or humor, and draws his sword, be sure and keep yours in its sheath, and he will soon be amiable, and duly punished. If the national cabinet, with which another nation has to treat, as readily and naturally shows fight as the bull-dog, whose teeth are his tempters, then the easy and successful path is one of genial diplomacy and kindly tact. Never will you wake, if you are wise, the sleeping furies; and how often are we called to admire the fertile ingenuity and delicate skill with which some mothers correct their over-firm children, as by a mere inadvertency, or an unstudied showing of reasons and gaining the consent in advance of giving the order, or an insinuation of reason and love that conquers before there is chance for battle. And forbearance is never out of place, or void of promise, in this passion-heated world ready

to burst in flames. Scarcely can there be a finer exhibition of humanity than by this sparing policy; never a silence more divine; never a retreat more victorious; never an inactivity so fruitful or becoming. What heroism is patience under provocation!

But one thing is to be heartily said of the contradictors, — they are not malignant. They mean no ill to others, whatever the result of their words and acts; and do not make a fiendish feast of the pain they may occasion. Dr. Johnson plead to Boswell ignorance of the nerves he was accused of disturbing, and plead rightly; and most or all, who should be classed under the head of constitutional opponents, we may believe to be blind to the injuries they inflict. An obstinate standing-out comes near being a virtue, as being the reaction of a stout and over-firm selfhood, which fears servility and surrender and a too easy compliance, as a great general fears defeat. It is a manly aplomb that leans a little away, as an insurance against sudden surprise and a cheap consent and falling prone at every one's feet. It is an instinct of firmness that will keep up the strong beat of its pulse by a sure urging; a too severe temper in the steel, which destroys pliability; too much rosin in the tallow,

which brings an excess of hardness. But how much better this than that life which is a cheap "mush of concessions," an insipid dish of agreements; which echoes and reflects, and floats like a chip on the current, being never self-impelled nor self-directed. The contradictors, hateful as they are, standing across all the tracks and running their hard heads against every proposition, are yet far more respectable than the conceders, who are a species of jelly-fish, and worthless. We can spare the obstinates as an expensive race to whom we must give too many cakes to keep the peace, as costing us silence, forbearance, our point often, and, it may be, a shade of self-respect; but the limp people, the human nature that is fluid, the uncooled metal which takes all shapes, we despise.

Cousins to the contradictors are the critics, as a class, whose inhumanity is also not a positive trait, but an excess of self-love. In the main, critics do not wish to be unkind or to do an injury, but like to see and feel their own wisdom and superiority. Criticism is very often but another kind or species of self-praise. We can adroitly extol number one by faulting number two. The eye has we know not what sense

of complacency in discovering imperfections in the work or ways of another, as seeing what another did not see: this is felt to be a credit to vision and taste. We strangely forget that the highest and most creditable criticism is in seeing and knowing the good and beautiful, in a quick and sure sensibility to the fine points, a recognition and confession of merits. *That* bespeaks a better capacity and higher level of the critic.

We are divine if we are able to recognize the divinities; and the best discipline both of eye and heart is precisely this research for points to move our admiration and gratitude. Education is only the detection of the better and the best, and then assent and affiliation. The secret of all felicity is in keeping open and close relations with the finest and fairest in all things, — in the weather, in the landscapes, in books, pictures, sermons, orations, journeys, and neighbors and friends. For credit, for discipline, and as an act of justice to others, and to the end of the best delights, criticism should be a positive and benign office. Rally your angel and seek the angelic. Spare the lower eye to the utmost and the sense of the imperfect. An unselfish and fair criticism, looking both ways, is in

order; and when it is for the defence or service of nature, when it condemns only to teach, or denies the better to affirm, or when it would remove, with well-meant interest, an obstacle from the path of genius and further its progress, — it is then both a grace and a duty, and nothing will be so welcome to all true workers. On such critics the world may well call down a blessing. Who comes to his task thus should have our hand and heart; his words should be sweeter and more treasured than any message of praise! Help is always better than applause. But our criticism is far too eager and free and inevitable to be of this divine order; and forces the conclusion that it is a roundabout way of seeing and feeling ourselves agreeably.

The ordinary critic obtrudes. He is neither just nor kind; yet he means neither injustice nor unkindness, but wants to show his own superior standing, what levels he is above, how fine a vision he has to detect what another has overlooked. His stock is all taken in the home company, as if Cæsar were so much to Cæsar that he would condemn Rome to honor himself, which were no honor. It was said Dr. Johnson never praised what was above him. His egotism must needs be hard on transcendent merits,

and loved to commend those which his own outranked. "I would hang a dog," said he, "that should read the 'Lycidas' of Milton twice." Addison could not look up any better, because he could never lose sight of himself, or make himself secondary by commending higher merits. With a self-complacent sneer he said of Bunyan, the first of allegorists, "I never knew an author that had not his admirers!" But does not Sir Roger de Coverley limp far behind poor Pilgrim in the race for fame? When Michel Angelo's colossal statue of David was just set up, Soderini, affecting criticism, said, "The nose is too large." Whereupon Angelo, with chisel in hand and some dust to let fall, mounted the steps and made believe he altered the nasal prominence, but did not. "How now?" said he. "Excellent!" exclaimed Soderini. It was a victory of self-love, and not of high taste, or devotion to art.

The story has gained wide credit that a celebrated painter set a picture in the market-place, with a brush and pot of paint along with it, and an invitation to all critics that they cover what they did not like. In twenty-four hours, as we are not surprised to learn, there had come a total eclipse over that canvas; and in

front of it there had been who shall say how many self-congratulations! When did fashion ever find one in quite so good style as itself? Beauty has to look twice to see beauty; and the ugly, admitting beauty, will deny to it wisdom and virtue, or will say, with a self-gratulatory accent, "Beauty is only skin deep." Venus quizzed Psyche. All noses have the turn-up joint, and you shall find great freedom from rust in that quarter. By self reference, it is a world of fine people we live in; but by imposed construction, nobody is much, or only passable. The generation of healthy and hearty admirers is yet to be born and make the air sweet with their breath.

Selfishness is the prime sin of the race, and it is enough to give one bad eyes to look at some of its worst forms. But we are all selfish. Nature, to serve high ends, has endowed us with so much of this bias that no one can always control it. Our best discipline is still not up to the demand. Our best purposes we forget. However often we turn over a new leaf, we are sure to dash the page with the old blot. But we need not be over-nice. Self is rightly a stubborn centre; and the safety and success of all is best secured, as a rule, by each attending

chiefly to his own interests. Life is still a battle of units, and about the best we can do is not to hinder each other's efforts. Too much charity is cruelty, as too much medicine is malpractice. A little resistance, to keep one and another to their feet, and eager in the strife; a broad hint to every party to open shop and go to work; a general policy of letting our neighbors alone; some thickness of ear to the ready appeals of the idlers, or even replies a little tart and biting, — such a course, however it look to the sentimentalist, is no doubt for the best all round.

We would not advocate a race with cripples, but the man who comes in ahead in an honorable competition is entitled to credit, since he but makes the best use of his time and strength, which is everybody's privilege and duty. He must not belittle his gifts through pandering to a cheap sentiment. The eagle is not required to wait for snails, but only to leave the way open and invite them on by his own flights. Nor is wealth in all cases, nor in most, the plunder which our flippant socialist or Communist orators would make it out to be, but may fit men as perfectly and properly as their bodies; and will be likely to serve the common weal a deal better than as if it were forcibly distributed among the masses,

most of whom have no power to animate and use possessions, but would either waste or leave them idle. Nature nowhere suffers uniformities in size, color, or shape. The dead levels are wisely broken. The unity is one of variety; and we could not remake the world so well as it is made now. Self-love and self-help, within a wide scope, instead of being sins, are among the first of virtues; and even

> "When the soul has tasted perfect love,
> And been illuminated from above,
> Still in its selfhood it would seek to shine."

A right self-love plays into the love of others. It is the first ring in the golden chain that links to the remotest star and the farthest soul. In finding ourselves truly, we find humanity, and take a prime lesson in universal good-will. The one explains all and includes all. In coming to myself, I come to the human race, and find my close relations to sages and Hottentots, saints and sinners, the abounding and the needy; and shall own to the bond in theory and practice. To know my own joy is to know all joys and to rejoice in them; and the first throb of general pity springs up with my own misery, which opens my eyes to see the same thing in another and my heart to yield compassion. The

defect of those who know only good health and happy fortunes is often a lack of sympathy. We must always go abroad from the nearest point. We begin all journeys at the home end by virtue of an ancient necessity. Self is the common factor of all the multiples. Self-knowledge is a prime mixture in all knowledge, and the key to universal wisdom. The heart that has not found itself is ignorant of all hearts, and proffers no sympathy as not aware of what it is worth. Do not fear a high degree of self-regard, or resting securely on the pivot of number one, only keep clear of the taint of vanity; for only as we arrive at the worth of the soul in ourselves, do we learn the grounds of generosity.

It is, moreover, the diversity of selfhoods which secures all the necessary refractions and diverse ministries of love. Charity is temperamental. Our love is as personal as our face. We look at the world out of our own eyes; and because we differ so in our constitutions, to which we must be true, it is happily provided that nobody shall be passed by, no want cry in vain, no plate be held out with none to look after its supply. Nature knows the way to all ends, which is the easy one of having them involved in the beginnings, as conclusions lie in premises, or fruit in

the seed to the minutest particular of form and flavor. Thus, for example, the strong moral natures, the men and women who are nine-tenths conscience, they who set right and wrong in clearest lights and regard them as the prime facts of the world, will feel chiefly for the wronged, will have all the slaves set free, will take charge of the scales and have justice to every man weighed out to an exactness; in short, they are laid under a necessity of being reformatory and, on occasions, even revolutionary, "teaching tyrants that they also have a joint in their necks." Through men like Clarkson, Granville Sharp, Wilberforce, Parker and Garrison love becomes the servant of justice, and the warfare for truth and right is never allowed any truce by such; and it is by them that much of progress has been enforced. Piety carries the humane instinct and principle in a missionary direction, and may be blind to a thousand other wants, and get a bad name which it does not deserve, since its tendency to the benighted is as normal as that of the needle to its north, or that of the poet to his song. The Judsons are haunted day and night by visions of unsanctified Pagans. The last felicity of devoutness is to build a temple and hang a bell

in it to make appeal, to send abroad a Bible, to spread a knowledge and love of God, to have men on their knees. On the contrary, under Girard's golden jacket was hatred of prayers and ministers, which he would interdict, but a special tenderness, like a mother's, for children; and hence his great charity, — perhaps the greatest in our land yet from any one man, — in behalf of orphans; and this brooding, solicitous, parental affection, with which a goodly number of breasts are charged, is the world's dower to childhood, securing juvenile asylums, reform schools, missions, and colleges. There is always, in the needed proportions, a ruling passion for nursing to be counted on. It is said Florence Nightingale, in her girlhood, had her dolls sick for the most part, that she might soothe and comfort them; and many like her, with tender bodies to bias the heart, hold their gift of soothing, as Angelo, Shakspeare, and Channing held theirs of art, poetry, and ethics. Howard was a special ambassador, having his high commission signed and sealed with the blood of his own heart, to the abused and abased prisoners of his time; and is not Mr. Bergh, of to-day, by reason of some fine gift, a sort of Howard to sick and bruised

dumb animals? Our most prominent mercies are always characteristic, and, in order to their greatest beauty and usefulness, should be permitted this trait. Consult your talent, and then use it. Invite your heart to elect freely its office of humanity. Love all and serve all as best you can, but do not be too timid of partialities: they are the divine methods of best achieving the universal.

There are two types of love so perfect they can only be rare; for Nature has to cast her dice many times to throw an exceptionally good head or great heart. The first of these is magnanimity, or that higher and finer genius and instinct of the heart which sees, like a prophetic or poetic or scientific eye, what the ordinary vision takes no note of, and realizes the perfect degrees of sympathy in practice, which are as Greek to the masses. There is a felicity of tenderness which is like certain happy strokes of the artist that surpass even his own intent and must be ascribed to the Muse. There is a style of heart that is always beforehand with itself, and has met without taking thought the nice points of consideration and service with nicer skill. No calculation could have so succeeded. The perfect bloom of feeling is always vital, and

realizes, through a fine sympathy, Plutarch's advice: "Do not speak of your happiness to a man less fortunate than yourself;" or the spirit of the old proverb, "Be sure you never know that the cobbler has black thumbs." To see a deformity as if you did not see it; to hear an impediment of speech as if you heard it not, — this is a prime credit: it is the blindness and deafness of a divine pity. When by his comrades, at their games, the easiest place is given the lame boy, without seeming to do so, with a tender delicacy that does not appear, as if fortune had interfered and favored him, or some guardian angel had superintended the lots, — then we catch a beam of the best sun that shines. When we talk wide from points that give pain, — praising the baby for wit, if it lack beauty; when we take on a plain style of dress and a low tone of address in humble company, sparing the poor the bitter sense of contrast, hiding to a large degree the differences which are against them, as the good Queen Victoria is said to so visit the poor as if she were not much richer than they; when we rally the farmer on cattle and land, and ask him no questions about Latin or the latest books; when we invite from all their best, which it is ever a joy to

set forth, and secretly aid them to keep their worst out of sight, since that they can only painfully expose, — then we touch one of the ideal graces of behavior, which is like some happy triumph of genius.

With peacocks, a perfect social art would turn the conversation to tails; with stags, to horns; with eagles, to wings and the miracle of a wide and sharp vision; with jackals, to the great need and value of scavengers to health and comfort. If you are a first-class gentleman or lady, with your heart in the right place, you will have this divining instinct of what may be kindly said and what kindly left unsaid; and will not, at least, with unfeeling heedlessness or malice, ask a defeated candidate how the election went; nor demand of an old lady with black hair where she buys her dyes; nor remind a jilted bachelor that the only bliss of life is in being a family-man; nor say to one with a cough and a hectic, that "consumption is incurable," as a man of indelicate and careless fibre said of my sore throat one day, as we met on the street, "I knew five men just so, and all but one died;" nor will you ask a hobbyist on what horse he is mounted now; nor jest an author for the scarcity of his readers, since he will not be likely to

take it so happily as did Augustus, who, when his tragedy of Ajax was hissed from the stage, quietly and without concernment erased it, and on being asked by a heartless acquaintance what had become of his hero, he said, with a hearty laugh, "Ajax is dead; he has swallowed a sponge."

The misfortunes of mankind are the heart's opportunities; and when they are even trivial and ludicrous, the case is still one for honorable and heartfelt reserve, as if to spare a blush, which would spare itself, were a point of honor and good-will, and quite worth the while. And folly, by the best code, is secured from a chuckling and cold banter. The satire that is selfish is satanic. A jest which is not likely to be enjoyed all round is never indulged by the magnanimous, but only by the vulgar and unfeeling.

In the social circle, a rare gift of love is sure to draw on the pet topics; opens the way for each one to make his or her best cast in the conversation. Coming to visit his truly courteous city cousins, the backwoodsman will have his chance to show that there are other than metropolitan merits wherewith to grace the finest drawing-room. Love contrives gracefully, at

length, to set in front the corners of the room, where we often find the best company, the learners who are for this reason well able to be teachers. Madame Récamier, the parlor queen, paid her respects first and most to the timid, and said she "found modesty to be the badge of merits." The general who has a brother's heart beating under his uniform, instead of jesting his terrified raw-recruits in their first battle, says, "Rally, boys! I was just so once." Every worthy pocket is well supplied with anodynes.

Shall we say there is a love that is a virtue of that perfection that it may realize the paradox of innocent transgressions, may sin without sinning, may make artifice and disguise divine, — as Nature kindly plays us false in the apparent rising and setting of the sun, and in keeping us out of the secret that the cloud is a rack of cold and cutting mist, and in playing on us many a fine trick of illusion that is better for us than would be the naked truth? I know we must not venture more than a whisper in this direction, or we shall have the door opened and the way paved to the black gulf. But one must have just a peep over this fearful rim. The heart is privileged. Like the poet, love is entitled

to some license, and may waive, as a wise superior, the moral exactitudes. Right or wrong, who is going to reprove the grace of concealment whereby little Lizzie Hexam — the sweetest child of all Dickens's sweet ideal children — continued to seem to her gruff, hard father, old Gaffer Hexam, the river-man, not to know books, when, by the favor of a friend and her own hidden industry, she did know them, — lest she should render him unhappy by a sense of his ignorance and excite his easy and fierce jealousy? Blessed Lizzie! One wishes there were a world of people so sparing of the unwelcome points. Such delicate hiding of the painful contrasts will serve for any of us as oil and not acid to the hinges of the celestial gate.

"In our law," said the wise Hafiz, "there is no sin but cruelty;" in other words, love may have some choice of means to its ends, since in its greatness is involved its safety. I knew a young lad who was wounded whilst in the country on his summer vacation, who insisted that the message of his hurt should be set in somewhat better light than it would strictly bear, when taken to his father and mother in the city. Indeed, I bore the message, and saw

there was great merit of tenderness and better wisdom in this exacted abatement from the truth; and without scruple, as he requested, I played the precious deception. A booby would have had the worst told, and in the worst way, heedless of giving pain; but a large-hearted boy, shouldering his burdens in secret, would have something better than the best published to those who loved him most. When love flatters thus by setting the best side to, or hides the painful reality behind a sunny face, though assumed, and is true to its genius still, checking sighs and hiding tears out of tender regard to others, who has a heart to turn critic on any slight bias of statements? Who is so hateful then as the casuist? If truth were only refracted by love, the world would have nothing to fear. If the straight lines are bent only in the service of mercy, they will never be broken; or Truth may safely waive her claim to her Superior, but not to any of the lower powers, not to avarice, pride, or lust, which, being selfish, would subject her to serious strains and abuses.

One never thinks less of the Creator for playing off so many illusions to the eye, they are so well meant and kindly, or that vision is

a gift so charmingly deceptive, arching the sky which is not arched, enchanting the distance which is not enchanted; and so be that our artifice is always beneficent, like the doctor's bread pills for nervous patients, or like forced and heroic smiles to cheer on wider joys, the case will be only to our credit.

Take another view of this fine spirit. Note the sharpness of its eye for the adverse circumstance, and the felicity of its apology. Leverrier's scientific instinct was not more acute to detect the hidden star that explained certain ugly-looking oscillations among the planets. Love is slow to believe in pure malignity; and any twelve men, of usual heart, will eagerly listen to the plea of insanity on the criminal's behalf. Why was this or that rider thrown? Was there no "nut under the saddle"? But suppose we look and find none, may he not have the benefit of a presumption and a measure of unbespoken pity?

Magnanimity would know all the facts, and where the worst appears would judge and condemn leisurely, as if there were some favoring secret, some mitigating circumstance not yet discovered. It waits to find a better construction, instead of seizing the worst; asks after the

antecedents. "Did this man sin or his parents, that he was born blind?" Did this man steal or his grandfather, who is playing his old trick through his descendant? Is this evil woman herself or her evil ancestor, and not wholly responsible? Mr. Prescott is full of kindly defences of his hard heroes, Pizarro and Almagro; and says of the latter, "The name of foundling comprehends an apology for much that is wrong in his after life." These people who are bad enough, as all must allow, who can say they are not the fated victims of some forgotten spendthrift, assassin, epicure, statesman, or crowned head, like Henry VIII., or low-bred and lewd princess-royal, or lazy and lecherous lazzaroni? Who holds the secret of their blood? What Liebig or Berzelius has had a fibre of their heart or cell of their brain under adequate inspection? Would you, who make so free of your censures, have escaped the same results under the same conditions? But who are you, that you can lift and throw fate so surely and gracefully? Who are you, that blood will not tell on your fortunes? or that China will not, in the fulness of time, give you a tea-colored face and Africa a black skin and flat nose? Who are you, that you may count

out the facts and forces of the past and the present? "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone." Let judgment be handled with terror; since no one knows history and what evil chain drags the life in spite of its stoutest resistance?

A higher love has a sharp eye for the best renderings; and, in lieu of a better ground of leniency, will finally resort to the occult and evil mysteries of the air. It is the only fit judge, as having an eye to a wider scope of facts. Our hard law is so far kind as to allow the benefit of a doubt; and first offences are rightly treated with a gentle and yielding hand by good judges, as if they might be done under some degree of ignorance or by a partial oversight and inadvertency.

It is doubtful if the guilty are ever as guilty as they appear, since they must be largely the victims of bad blood, or bad education, or are surprised in some lower mood by temptation, which yesterday would have had no power to touch them and would be spurned tomorrow. Perhaps the criminal class, ill-born, ill-bred, spurred on by sharp wants, steeped in bad liquor, lured by the evil customs and habits of the time, emboldened by lax laws and

easy escapes, is not so much to blame as the community they live in. Are they not the children of the times, for whom the times are more responsible than they for themselves? The age is their father and mother; and if *it* were right, *they* could not be wrong. Not one of us but has helped to beget them such as they are.

Where fair dealing is the law and usage, the rogues readily yield. Virtue necessitates virtue. A college professor said to me, "A high moral tone in the class overrules the worst boys." Frankness brings all the secrets from their hidings. The proprieties gain respect. The tide draws in all the drops. From the judge's sentence of "Guilty," every ear that listens should take home to itself a part of its meaning, and some penitence would not be amiss. To convict one is to convict all. Society is a banian-tree, with one spirit in all its branches. The community should see that the offender is he who only fails to keep hidden the general secrets, and that not this man only, but all men with him, should share in the penalty. The prison-walls are by grace or necessity never large enough; the halter should draw, with differing degrees, upon all the necks. Cannot they who need clemency be a little clement? or is it the

rule with rogues to deal severely by rogues? We owe the bad, first of all, better lives to brace them.

Reverse history and you reverse all things. But it is not easy to see what we might have been, and make due allowance for circumstances. We cannot see ourselves in another; or self-love recoils selfishly, and would not be wise with this wisdom and justly generous. The excusing mind is not often met with; since it is not easy, with our poor talent of imagination, to pass out of ourselves and adopt the identity and history of another, which is essential to just and lenient views. We are often harsh for want of range of vision and a fair understanding of just how it is with those who falter and fall. We do not see the other sides, from which modifying lights will always be cast. We rate every one as by our own history and experience, and what we can do, and are much like the eagle, in the old fable, who, feeling his wings and recalling his many flights, berated the fox that he did not mount into the air and keep company with the clouds. Prosperity endangers our humanity.

"He jests at scars, that never felt a wound."

He is more of a saint who has been a sinner. Experience is the best interpreter. The hand

that has fought with want is soonest opened in charity. The conscience that has been stung has the most of pity. We must somehow be set in the place of the erring to find the motives of mercy. The best poet, other things being equal, would be the best judge, as having the readiest skill of access to another.

We need more of the magnanimity or justice of the London Quaker — was it John Graham? — who was given to saying, as some handcuffed man, covered with crime and shame, was led by his window on his way to the gallows, "But for the grace of God and a good home, there goes John Graham." Said a good judge in one of our criminal courts, "I try to make the history of the accused at the bar my own." Socrates advised one who was about to pass sentence on a thief, to "first offer a sacrifice to Fate." Blessed are they who can thus discount on their good fortunes! Blessed are they who can exchange records with their kind! What like this to protect justice and beget mercy!

But we must not carry comity too far; and the second perfect degree of love, always rare in practice, is a plain and level dealing with each other's needs. What is worse than too much candy and coddling, too many honeyed

words? We must not lose sight of progress, or that life is in its uses. Love should be a surgeon as well as a nurse. The unwelcome truth may be the only mercy in many a case, and should be spoken out. Can you throw yourself across your friend's evil path with a generous antagonism? Plutarch sets it down as a rare credit to the love of Plato, that, "observing the morose and sour humor of his friend Xenocrates, he admonished him to sacrifice to the Graces." Flattery is often the worst cruelty, as leading its victim to mistake demerit for merit, and to rest at the base of the mount as one who has reached the summit. The best love for another looks to character and a higher success. Severity may be charity. Our state-attorneys complain that there is growing up a cruel tendency to concede to rogues and avert the claims of justice, to the injury of the guilty and the innocent.

> "Mercy is not itself that oft looks so;
> Pardon is still the nurse of second woe."

It is a question, whether humanity pays. But by every sensible person that should be looked upon as the same question as whether there is a God. The existence of Deity is guaranty of just compensations; that every pound shall be

balanced by another pound; that we shall get as good as we give; that no gold will go through the perfect sieve, but that, to the very minutest atom, all will be rescued and rated and paid for. There need be no insurance on risks, for there are none. Morality is not a venture, nor charity a lottery, but these are tied to blessed ends by unfailing laws. The virtues are overwatched by more than the eyes of Argus, and upheld by more than the arms of Briareus. We are sent to a market where everything brings a fair price. We have all we earn. Call it Fate, or Fortune, or Providence, or what you will, every fine eye must see that the world is set up and secured in the interest of a perfect equity. However it may look to any that beginnings and ends, causes and results, work and wages, are held together by limp and elastic and insecure bands, there are no blades sharp enough to cut them asunder, nor Titans stout enough to break them apart, nor æons long enough to rust away the tie. Sin never slips through and fares with its betters: however they may seem to feed from one dish, there is never the same flavor to the taste. There are no arts that can win against Nature. Honesty always throws loaded dice. "It is written in the sky, on the

pages of the air," say the Orientals, "that good deeds shall be done to him who does good deeds to others." Love buys love; honesty enforces honesty; custom becomes necessity. For one good turn another is not only deserved, but served. There is a delight in levelling the scales. When the Earl of Flanders sought refuge in the poor smoky hut of an old woman in Bruges, crying, "O good woman, hide me: I am thy Lorde, therle of Flanders!" — Froissart says, "She knewe hym well, for she had been often tymes at his gate to fetche alms; and she slyed hym safe away." Giving is getting, only silver is paid in gold. What we nobly give, we give into our own hands. The centrifugal impulse of the heart is taken in charge by a perfect centripetal law or agency; and the circle of giving and receiving, of outlay and income, is made complete.

Le Grice, the school companion of Charles Lamb, wrote to Talfourd, Lamb's biographer, "I never heard him [Lamb] mentioned at school without the addition of Charles, although, as there was no other boy of the same name, the addition was quite unnecessary; but there was an implied kindness in it, and it was a proof that his gentle manners excited that kindness." The

sweet-hearted boy was on the winning side. He could not lose in that game, because the cards were all trumps. The more indifferent to selfish ends was his fine playing, the more surely were those ends guarded by the sharp-eyed watchers of the world, and brought proudly and laid at his feet. When we divinely forget, there is One who divinely remembers and repays.

The deposits in the bank of love always return dividends. However the heart seems to send arrows at random, they are still directed by some wise Superior, and bring down game and insure the archer a feast. The most improbable ventures of mercy are safe. Some angel sits guard over every humane deed, and sees that it is returned at length with compliments. The Norse legend of the king's son is to the point, and shows that the Pagan eye had caught a view of this tie that is never broken or cut. Starting forth to find his six lost brothers, he early fell upon a hungry raven and fed it; he soon after found a salmon caught in the shoals, and, with a generous hand, pushed it back into the river; and next he met a wolf so famished that the wind whistled through his ribs, and he replied to the piteous begging of

the ugly brute by giving him his horse to devour. When he came at length to the cave of the "Giant without a Heart," he found his six fair brothers turned into stone statues to ornament the Giant's grounds. And the only means of rescue was to find and break the Giant's heart; but he learned, by a deal of risk and perseverance, that this was hidden in a golden egg, at the bottom of a deep well, that was enclosed by a high tower, that was situated on an island at the centre of the lake. What to do? Reaching the shore, there was no boat or boatman, and the case looked hopeless. But, to his great relief, Greylegs, the wolf, was at hand and volunteered to swim him over. But, when safely landed, how to get into the tower, which had but a single door and the key to that resting on the dizzy pinnacle among the clouds, which no man could scale? Would you believe it? The raven was waiting to bring him the key, which in gratitude it did. But how reach the bottom of the well? for two points were nothing without carrying the third. And lo! the salmon had made his way to the place by some secret channel, and rose to the surface and begged to be granted so great a favor as the privilege of

fetching the egg. And so the Giant's heart was found and broken, and the king's son came home in triumph with his six brothers. The story is wild and simple enough, and of itself not worth telling; but it is very wise and comforting as a Pagan reading of Providence. It shows that the perfect circles are never broken; that action and reaction are equal; that beneficence returns on its own path; that there is no mischance, but a perfect law of compensation extending to the most improbable cases. It is not in vain that we are benignant to a wolf, a fish, or a bird. The beams of this sun, as of that in the sky, are always reflected.

One day as I was riding in an omnibus that seemed full, but was not, there came a man with a waspish face, an air of discontent with all things, and a voice utterly dry and tuneless, and looked in at the door and growled out his demand for a seat. But no one moved. There seemed no spirit of accommodation abroad. There was a secret and uniform league among the passengers to keep Peppercastor on his legs. Soon he quitted the scene to look for better luck in the next coach. Instantly, on his departure, as if to heighten the contrast, a full two hundred pounds of good-humor looked

in at our door, and smiled a broad smile at the slim chance for a seat. But every eye was an invitation to Broadbreast to come in and occupy. All the people in the coach speedily compressed and drew themselves in, as if by some contractile magic. There was a spare seat beside every passenger, and our mammoth new-comer sat with becoming blandness and gratitude. It was the easy victory of good-will and humanity, by which it is ever a delight to be conquered.

Love is itself the first of victories. It is a temper charming as the air of June. It is a sugar always to the taste. And when one is right with one's self, he is on the road to all manner of triumphs. Love is master of the social harmonies, as the sun has the planets well disposed. Society is a sea for smooth sailing to those whose pilot is good-will, otherwise it is a rough way of collisions. Greatheart has all the porcupines in a good temper, with their barbed quills harmless; and not the few only, endeared by years of happy intercourse, but the masses, as they rise, angels and chimpanzees, fill him with constant delight. It is medicine to weak eyes to see how gracefully and genially some men move among men. To love, the sun is never eclipsed; the good meanings of Prov-

idence are always legible; there is still a warm breath in the coldest atmosphere; the wind is always in a genial quarter; the timings are all fortunate, as if ordered by special favor; and so much of cheer, from day to day, becomes the basis of a spacious temple of hopes. Love sees no ill-omens in the sky, but reasons from its bright to-day to a brighter to-morrow. Heaven always bears some likeness to earth; and the noble, generous, true, the open natures which are ever filled with gracious tides of life, the serving and happy, whilst here in the flesh, are the ones who array the future in the most attractive forms and colors.

And what is there like love to embalm a name? Gratitude has a good memory. The world will not forget its benefactors. It is no historic heresy to affirm that, when every titled officer who bravely fought and fell in front of the Malakoff, or who returned covered with glory to his native England or France, shall be named no more, Florence Nightingale, the good angel of the hour and the place, the gentle, the loving, the ministering, will live in a still green and growing remembrance. An American traveller found a savage in the wilds of Africa, who had never heard of or had forgotten

the name of Washington, but was cherishing the story of Florence Nightingale as a precious piece of news from the great world. A single chivalrous act, more than all the rest of his life, floats the name of Sir Philip Sidney on the current of time. Nothing wins against oblivion like love. As it is a law of the world that pure tones shall continue much the longest, and at the distance of a mile or two miles only perfect notes from a band will be heard, the harsh sounds having died by the way, dismissed because not welcome, — so it is a law of humanity that those names shall be best and longest cherished which are the most signal synonymes for love.

The benevolent are also one with God, who is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; and a sense of this oneness is a better legacy than all the wealth of Goshen, for with it is the sense of our immortality, as well as of our high rank to-day. It was Spinoza's doctrine that we live a brief or an enduring life, a temporal or eternal existence, according as we concentrate our being on fleeting or abiding elements and ends, as we tie to the perishable or permanent, as we hitch our chariot to a meteor or a star. Our journey is one with the

wave on which we ride. Even on this fatalistic ground, none would be so safe as he who affiliates with the Universal Love, which was and is and is to be. We should flee to the divine and eternal as for dear life itself. But immortality is not so uncertain. Our being is more than a shadow, or a baseless dream. The soul is real. But to the spiritual and loving is the best sense of victory over death. They know, by an inner witness, that they have part with the Life of the universe, the First and the Last and the Midst. Charity feels the Everlasting Unity. Love and God stand mutually pledged.

IX.

ON THE SQUARE.

"One still strong man in a blatant land,
Whatever they call him, what care I,
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat, one—
Who can rule and dare not lie."

TENNYSON'S MAUD.

"His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles;
His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate;
His tears pure messengers sent from his heart;
His heart as far from fraud, as heaven from earth."

SHAKSPEARE'S TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

EVERY gift carries with it some peril, or is liable to become its own enemy. We say of the wild youth, whom we still admire, if he can be held from fatal excesses, he will make a thrifty man; that is, we see that his fine talent is liable to run away with him. Sentiment, without which no nature is well-born, easily glides into sentimentalism, which is the most hateful of vices, if not the most vicious. A devout bias, equal to David's or Fenelon's, often miscarries and ends in rant and uproar. Independence is always on the eve of breaking

into impudence; another ounce, and the balance is lost; as grandpa's darling, drawn out of all restraint to-day and reaching the perfection of cunning, by being set to do his own likings, not only without hindrance but with loud applause, oversteps the bounds of good behavior to-morrow, and pulls the old man by the nose or ear, and bids him hold his tongue. The better the talent, the greater the need of checks. The most useful of agents — like lightning, steam, chloroform, or genius — is never quite safe out of harness. All spirit needs to be held and overruled by reason, restrained by customs, laws, religions; or something must be done to secure a regulated action, which alone will carry to the best ends.

Our gifts are not only their own enemies, but they are often enemies to each other. It is easy to see how hostile some of them are to integrity. For example, excess of suavity, as every observer well knows, robs many a man of his character, reduces him to a shadow or echo of his companions, draws him into a thousand false relations, which he will afterwards see and regret. His consent is daily or hourly given against his conscience. He habitually approves where he would honestly rebuke. He flatters.

He yields his own conduct to bad customs, — drinks though he sees the serpent coiled in the cup, swears when the words pierce his ear, and shams against his best sense. To spare a friend, he spoils himself. His affability is a double cruelty. Who would dare to count on his word? since to the next man he meets, however opposite, he will play the fawn, and swallow his own periods. His ancient prototype was Alcibiades, of whom Plutarch wrote: "When he dwelt at Athens, he was arch and witty as any Athenian of them all, kept his stable of horses, played the good-fellow, and was universally obliging; and yet the same man at Sparta shaved close to the skin, wore his cloak, and never bathed but in cold water. When he sojourned in Thrace, he drank and fought like a Thracian; and again, in Tissaphernes's company in Asia, he acted the part of a soft, arrogant, and voluptuous Asiatic." According to Horace Walpole, the Duke of Newcastle was apt to be amiable at the cost of his veracity: he must needs take on the humors of the hour, however foreign to his heart. With something of exaggeration, no doubt, Walpole shows how the duke threw himself into the spirit of the funeral of George II.: "He fell into a fit of

crying the moment he came into the chapel, and flung himself back in a stall, the archbishop hovering over him with a smelling-bottle; but in two minutes his curiosity got the better of his hypocrisy, and he ran about the chapel with his glass, spying who was there, spying with one hand, and mopping his eyes with the other." A habit of easily feigned or easily felt concurrence with all humors is fatal to virtue; or one may have so much suavity as to have no proper self-hood, and to be quite unreliable: —

> "A creature of amphibious nature:
> On land a beast, a fish in water."

Against a strong bias of fancy, or a lower order of imagination, conscience is called to fight a battle in which there is no truce, and is often a victory on the wrong side. We should say, the English are by birth, in this respect, a nation of truth-tellers. Long ago this title was given Alfred the Great, and the Saxon temperament would seem to justify it. The English are dryly matter-of-fact, and hate a second sense; they are naturally angular and exact, and hug close to realities; they are prosaic, free of intruding and luring fancies, and given to great plainness of statement and behavior. Integrity comes easy to such; and, but for their avarice and egotism,

which often overtop their moral nature, the most pains-taking would hardly be able to find a lie on the island. But where the English conscience has no strain, the French is the most severely tried. The French eye has a scenic trait, covers every fact with layers of illusions till the fact is no longer to be seen, has all the straight lines bent to humor its bias for the circular and flowing, no matter how truth fares by the act; so be that all is rendered graceful and *recherché*, a Frenchman will ask no question for conscience's sake; the most sober realities he will contrive to have set in holiday aspects, even at the cost of their identity; exaggerations are as natural to him as his breath. A French Paradise would be a world of gay phantasms, —Berkeley's phenomenal sphere tricked out in gorgeous colors.

The East has ever a need to stand guard over its native proneness to illusions, which is well known to exist there at the cost of a great deal of rectitude. An Arab is likely to have a better opinion of a romantic falsehood than of an unadorned truth. In spite of himself, and the best code of morals he inherits from his great teachers, and his affected regard for Otaiye, the hero of truth, —

"If the universe must die
Unless Otaiye told a lie,
He would defy the last fate's crash
And let all sink," —

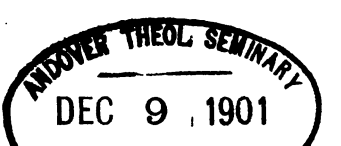
still the Arab can but shift the lights, and see all things as they are not; and his lips will be the servants of his eye.

In China and Japan, where jugglery is native, and, whatever straight lines it has bent, a prime credit when perfect, the ninth commandment of the Decalogue stands at a great disadvantage. These born disciples of the black arts can not be easily held "on the square." It will take many sermons to set them right, and secure them to simple truth. The missionary will still be in doubt whether their piety is serious or humorous, actual or a feint and a trick; and will regard them as converts who are liable to need converting. These nations are not to be counted on like the Saxon race, with its majesty and promise of an ingrain integrity. Virgil said he "did not dare to trust the Greeks, even when they made gifts;" since their regard for virtue was rather an æsthetic or Platonic sentiment, an exercise of taste or worship of beauty, than a birth from the moral nature. But the Oriental fancy is still less sure, for it sacrifices virtue on much lower grounds.

No one can doubt that the delight of childhood and youth in romance and strange lights, renders truth an easier sacrifice with them than with the advanced in years, who have come to the age of prose and verity. The young revel in wild and unreal stories, — the monstrous falsehoods of "Mother Goose" and "Jack and the Bean-Stalk," the impossible feats of "Sinbad the Sailor," the fables of Æsop and La Fontaine, the absurd and false feats of Don Quixote and Baron Munchausen, and the amazing improbabilities of the Norse legends. There is still some opium in the youthful blood, — a hint that it is native of the Orient; and, in consequence, the most sacred realities are easily set aside to give place to fancies. In early life, we toy with the illusory; we "make up" stories as a fine diversion, and half believe them true; we beg of all our friends for still larger and larger triumphs of imagination.

"By sports like these are all our cares beguiled."

But after our fortieth or fiftieth year we strike the hardpan and want no more dreams, no more alchemy and astrology, no more Utopias and Millenniums, no more painted gods and goddesses, no more world-saving orders and isms, no more play at blind-man's buff; we have seen bubbles


ANDOVER THEOL. SEMINARY
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enough by mid-life, having lost that itch from the eye; we have passed into a new and staid temperament, and crave truth and confidence before all else, — colors that will wash, words that are bonds and will stick, deeds that will not need to be done over again, more logic and less romance, a return to common sense, a modest and reliable air about all matters, and a dropping of the scenic and sensational. Youth are more tempted to set forth untrue views, to give a false sense, to cover facts with fancies, to sport with errors of all kinds, to make terms with obliquity, than will be the men and women to whom the years as they fly will ripen them.

Far less respectable is the hostility of avarice, vanity, appetite, and lust to man's true and honorable life. Moved by these lower passions, he waives the claims of duty on purely selfish grounds, and loses what of grace still attaches to an excess of suavity or an undue sway of imagination. Much of the unveracity of the time grovels, having a carnal source; or it is self that sinks falsehood to the lowest pit.

Against all and sundry that lure from the ways of rectitude, the conscience is to be invoked. It must suffice to name a few particulars that serve to foster the better motives.

Integrity saves the need of speech and advocacy. The man who is known to be honest, and always where his moral nature places him, carries his point by virtue of his position. That he is here or there, on this side or that, tells the whole story; and his silence is better than another man's eloquence. The Philadelphians were wont to ask where Dr. Franklin stood on any new question of the day; and they went as he went, without further showing of reasons. It was an English adage that Lord Brougham carried Parliament more by what he did not say than by what he did; and character is fully entitled to this silent power. The uncertain man must explain, also the new-comer, unless he carry an overwhelming moral advantage in his presence; our politicians are morbid qualifiers, and forever trying to set today right with yesterday; but the well-known moral hero has earned the right not to open his lips, and yet to have on his side the weight of argument. At a meeting of any kind, the voters watch the hand of the best man. A bad cause has nothing to fear so much as a great name charged with virtue, among the opposition. The sharpest weapon is often no weapon but character.

"Hercules with his club
The Dragon did drub;
But More of More-Hall,
With nothing at all
He slew the Dragon of Wantley."

We seek counsel and direction of the honest faces, pass by a dozen or a score that are rogues, fops, or of a hard and forbidding fibre, to come to the open brow and honest eye. We defer to plain and frank natures, as we cling to the firm and sure rocks when the waves threaten.

It is another merit of genuine virtue that it is set in open relations with the universe, and holds the best key to truth. Aristotle refers candor and perception to the same party, or makes honesty the path to discovery of the better and the best. In this he foreshadowed the Christian beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Pure waters best reflect the heavens. Integrity carries the lamp of instinct, or is the magnetic principle which draws life ever toward its true north. Truth is not discovered out of us, but is rather revealed in and through us; and our moral state is of prime importance to successful investigation. Invention has an ethical ground. The artists and poets have been among the best souls of the ages. It is not without a good

and sufficient reason that, in all the grades of our courts, we select for judges plain and honest men, instead of the nimble and able lawyers: conscience, rather than a quick and sharp intellect, holding the clue to justice. The selfish have a perverted vision, or are quite blind to the broadest and truest views. Habitual offenders not only lose the sense of their misdeeds, but benumb all their finer powers, and are gradually shut in from the better world of truth and grace. The universe is glass to the perfect soul, or a sphere for free and inviting range. Of Veracity Ben Jonson well sings: —

> "She wears a robe enchas'd with eagle's eyes,
> To signify her sight in mysteries."

In the survey of morals, every angle is found at last to touch this all-important centre, — that rewards and retributions are surer than the rising and setting of the sun; or that there is never an error in the scales that weigh out to all their dues. Your cunning trick, in one way or another, is sure to be turned inside out, and proven to be far enough from cunning; whilst simplicity and real worth, in what age soever, will make their way and find their account, because they are the accepted currency of the universe. He who doubts that falsehood is loss

and integrity gain, has read the book of Nature wrong end up; for geometry and numbers are not more exacting and self-faithful than morals. From the All-seeing Eye no tracks can be covered, and the end of every path, as of the course of the river to the sea, is foreordained; and there is no way to avoid running into the night but to follow the path of the sun. No man can hide his morals, nor elude their just effects. "Every poacher," said Sydney Smith, "is sure to be detected, — a hare in one hand and a pheasant in the other." The Pagan eye took note of this fatal tie between seed and harvest, desert and recompense; and we know of no nation which does not, by proverb and legend, attest its faith in the absolute justness of doom. The many adages bearing on this point are a credit to Nature, and the good sense that has so well observed it. Æsop spoke this verdict in fable for the Greeks. Woodman, moaning for his axe, which, by a sad chance, had slipped from his hand into the river, was overheard by the quick ear of Mercury; who, making a prompt dive, brought up first a golden and then a silver axe, which the man honestly refused as not his; from a third plunge, the god came up with the axe of iron, which was rightly

claimed. Mercury fitly rewarded such fealty to truth, against so great temptations, by making the man the happy owner of all the axes. Whereupon a base liar, moved by cupidity, went to the river and cast in his axe, and then set to crying like one with a broken heart. Mercury came and heard his artful story, and, leaping into the flood, rose with an axe of gold, which, with loud affirmation, the man claimed as his, and hastily made forward to clutch it. But the god instantly sunk in the flood and was seen no more, the trickster losing even the axe that was his. By various wild stories, the Norse literature celebrates the reign of justice in all things; showing how false gain is sure loss, and honesty never fails to draw down a train of blessings upon its path. In point, is the account of Arthur's accession to his kingship and the world-wide glory to which his name has risen. The right of kingly rule was to be determined by the ability to draw a miraculous sword from a miraculous stone, in which it has been miraculously set. One after another, the knights had given it a try, but had failed in every case. On occasion of an annual tournament, Sir Kay, in a gallant encounter, had broken his sword, and sent Arthur, his foster-brother, who was

then a lad, to secure him another as a substitute. On his way, the boy saw this magic sword in the magic rock, and drew it, quite innocent of the good fortune to which the act entitled him; and brought it to Sir Kay for service. The knight knew it well, and claimed that he had drawn it, and claimed the reward, — a kingdom. But it was returned to its place, to verify so great a feat, and the pretender stood powerless at its hilt; but Arthur could draw it quicker than the lookers-on could call his name. Sir Kay was disgraced, and his honest brother promoted to his rightful reward. The right is always in search of the party whose title is best. When the swindler and false claimant has got his reward, he has not got it, but has got instead some pretty apple of Sodom, or glittering toy that he will some day wish he had not. Judas wanted at length to throw up his shrewd bargain, as he had thought it. It must always be thus.

The instant anxiety of the man who has broken the law of integrity, to blind the gazing eye of the world by some means, usually another lie, and another, and yet a third, till he is drawn into the distracting coils of deceit, is a witness

to the regularity with which, in the most outward and obvious sense, the law of compensation holds sway. The wrong-doer expects the next man he meets will accuse him. He thinks his secret is already in the keeping of the police. Man makes this acknowledgment to the sway of an ordinary retribution. But the penalty is yet surer than he thinks. There are secret avengers, who never tire in their pursuit, nor miss their victim. Providence takes care of justice, not trusting it to our tardy and clumsy courts; and, on the more occult grounds, rectitude will be found to be the only prudence. The sinner must settle his account with the universe. If man is true, he will find the whole world — the hills and vales, the ocean and the stars, and the Life that pervades all — turning upon him a sunny face; but if he is false, the genius of the world will appear to him with a knit brow and a reproving eye, which will haunt him day and night.

A simple and reliable habit of speech and act; to be always frank and aboveboard; to give perfect weight and measure, and own up to whatever defects there may be in our work; to scorn arts and deceits; to waive all pretension,

and always to hew to the exact line, — this is more majestic than any sceptre, as part and lot with the Perfect, and richer than all applause, giving secret worth and charm to every day and night.

Cambridge: Press of John Wilson and Son.

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